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THE WRITINGS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

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Cows in Emerson's Pasture (*page 166*)

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THE WRITINGS OF
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

JOURNAL

EDITED BY BRADFORD TORREY

IV

MAY 1, 1852-FEBRUARY 27, 1853

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1906

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THE JOURNAL OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

VOLUME IV

I

MAY, 1852 (ÆT. 34)

May 1. 5 A. M. — To Cliffs.

A smart frost in the night, the plowed ground and platforms white with it. I hear the little forked-tail chipping sparrow (*Fringilla socialis*) shaking out his rapid *tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi-tchi*, a little jingle, from the oak behind the Depot. I hear the note of the shy Savannah sparrow (*F. Savanna*),[1] that plump bird with a dark-streaked breast that runs and hides in the grass, whose note sounds so like a cricket's in the grass. (I used to hear it when I walked by moonlight last sum-

[1] Probably have seen it before, — seringo. [Though here, where the "seringo-bird" makes its first appearance in the *Journal*, its identity with the savanna sparrow seems to have been unquestioned by Thoreau, it proved afterwards (see p. 8., *et seq.*) to be almost as puzzling to him as the ever elusive "night-warbler." The probability is that the "seringo" in this and most other cases was the savanna sparrow, but it may sometimes have been the yellow-winged, or grasshopper, sparrow, or even, as Thoreau once suspected, the grass finch, or vesper sparrow. It is quite likely that at times the bird he saw was not the bird he heard.]

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mer.) I hear it now from deep in the sod, — for there is hardly grass yet. The bird keeps so low you do not see it. You do not suspect how many there are till at length their heads appear. The word *seringo* reminds me of its note, — as if it were produced by some kind of fine metallic spring. It is an earth-sound. It is a moist, lowering morning for the mayers. The sun now shines under a cloud in the horizon, and his still yellow light falls on the western fields, as sometimes on the eastern after a shower in a summer afternoon. Nuttall says the note of the chipping sparrow is "given from time to time in the night like the reverie of a dream." Have I not heard it when spearing? Is not that the tree sparrow which I have heard in the fall (in company with the *F. hyemalis*), which also clucks like a hen? Nuttall says they sing *s'weedit s'weedit weet.* I hear a lark in the meadow.

Hayden is sowing his oats. There is not much rye sown in the spring. There is the old picture in the fables, the sower stepping over plowed ground and the yellowish grain in a regularly formed shower in the air. I do not hear the peep of the frogs at this time. Found the first violet, which would open to-day, — either *V. sagittata* var. *ovata*,[1] or *V. cucullata*, for the leaves are not toothed at base nor arrow-shaped as in the first, yet they are hairy and I should say petiole-margined. Still, like the latter, they are rolled in at base and the scape is four-angled (??). I found this violet under a bank by a pool-side. I think it *cucullata*. The woods have a

[1] ["Either" and "or *V. cucullata*" crossed out in pencil. See p. 38.]

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damp smell this morning. I hear a robin amid them, yet there are fewer singers to be heard than on a very pleasant morning some weeks ago. The low early blueberry, June berry, is now well budded. The grass ground, low ground at least, wears a good green tinge now. There are no leaves on the woods. The river is high over the meadows. There is a thin gauze-like veil over the village (I am on Fair Haven Hill), probably formed of the smokes. As yet we have had no morning fogs to my knowledge.

I hear the first towhee finch. He says *to-wee, to-wee*, and another, much farther off than I supposed when I went in search of him, says *whip your ch-r-r-r-r-r-r*, with a metallic ring. I hear the first catbird also, mewing, and the wood thrush, which still thrills me, — a sound to be heard in a new country, — from one side of a clearing. I think I heard an oven-bird just now, — *wicher wicher whicher wich.*[1] I am on the Cliff. It is about six. The flicker cackles. I hear a woodpecker tapping. The tinkle of the huckleberry-bird comes up from the shrub oak plain. He commonly lives away from the habitations of men, in retired bushy fields and sprout-lands. A partridge bursts away from under the rock below me on quivering wings, like some moths I have seen. We have, then, flowers, and the song of birds before the woods leave out, — like poetry. When leaving the woods I heard the hooting of an owl, which sounded very much like a clown calling to his team. Saw two large woodpeckers on

[1] ["Think" is crossed out in pencil, and "black and white creeper" substituted for "oven-bird."]

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an oak. I am tempted to say that they were other and larger than the flicker, but I have been deceived in him before.

5 P. M. — To Red Bridge.

The smell of our fresh meadows, from which the flood has in some measure receded, reminds me of the scent of salt marshes, to which it corresponds. A coarse grass is starting up, all the greener and more luxuriant for the freshet, one foot high. I hear a new kind of stertorous sound from the meadow; a new frog? The flowers (male) of the maple by the bridge are all dried up, and its buds are just expanding into leaves, while red maples are in their flowering prime. I find by the leaves that this is probably a white maple. The purple finch is come to Minott's neighborhood. I saw it. I rarely see it elsewhere than about R. W. E.'s. Are they not attracted hither by his fir trees? (I think it was not the tree sparrow which I used to hear in rainy weather.)

E. Wood, Senior, says it was in 1818 the river was so high, and that Sted. Buttrick marked it, but thinks the last flood an inch or two higher. Wood has observed that the North River will rise first, and he has seen the South Branch flowing up-stream faster than ever he saw it flowing down. Tells a story of barrels that floated once from where Loring's factory is to the old Lee or Barrett house meadow.

The little peeping frogs which I got last night resemble the description of the *Hylodes Pickeringii* and in some respects the peeping hyla, but they are probably

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the former, though every way considerably smaller (*vide* pencil mark in report). Mine are about three quarters of an inch long as they sit, seven eighths if stretched; thigh five sixteenths, leg same; tarsus and toes one half; four-fingered and five-toed with *small* tubercles on the ends of them. Some difference in their color; one is like a pale oak leaf at this season, streaked with brown; two others more ashy. Two have crosses like this on back, of dark brown. On the head thus, with transverse bands on the legs. I keep them in a tumbler. Peep at twilight and evening, occasionally at other times. One that got out in the evening on to the carpet was found soon after by his peeping *on the piano*. They easily ascend the glass of the window; jump eighteen inches and more. When they peep, the loose wrinkled skin of the throat is swelled up into a globular bubble, very large and transparent and quite round, except on the throat side, behind which their little heads are lost, mere protuberances on the side of this sphere; and the peeping wholly absorbs them; their mouths shut, or apparently so. Will sit half a day on the side of a smooth tumbler. Made that trilling note in the house. Remain many hours at the bottom of the water in the tumbler, or sit as long on the leaves above. A pulse in the throat always, except in one for an hour or two apparently asleep. They change their color to a darker or lighter shade, chameleon-like.

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May 2. 6 A. M. — Is not the chipping sparrow the commonest heard in the village streets in the mornings now, sitting on an elm or apple tree? Was it the black and white warbler that I saw this morning? It did not stop to creep round the trunks; was very shy. Or was it the myrtle-bird? Might it have been the log-cock woodpecker that I saw yesterday morning? Reptiles must not be omitted, especially frogs; their croaking is the most earthy sound now, a rustling of the scurf of the earth, not to be overlooked in the awakening of the year. It is such an earth-sound.

The flowers of Cheney's elm are not only much earlier and larger than others, but the peduncles are in separate bundles proceeding from a common *short* peduncle. There appears to be such a difference, the tree is made of a different form and appearance. I can easily break off a twig from its branches, which hang very low. *Vide* the rough-barked elm in the swamp, — if it is not the corky elm. The balm-of-Gilead begins to show its male (?) catkins.

The commonplaces of one age or nation make the poetry of another. I think that my seringo-bird has not the marks of the Savannah sparrow. Looks like a chip-bird; or did I see a spot on its breast? That white maple, methinks, has a smoother bark than the red ones.

P. M. — To Conantum.

The handsome blood-red lacquered marks on the edge and under the edge of the painted tortoise's shell, like the marks on a waiter, concentric, few colors like

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it in nature. This tortoise, too, like the *guttata*, painted on these parts of its shell and on legs and tail in this style, but throat bright yellow stripes, sternum dull yellowish or buff. It hisses like the spotted. Tortoises everywhere coupling. Is the male the large and flatter, with depressed sternum? It so seems? There is *some* regularity in the *guttata's* spots, — generally a straight row on back. Some of the spots are orange sometimes on the head.

Brought home two little frogs which I have described in the Report (*q. v.*) but cannot make out. Are they young? The andromeda is ready to bloom. The yellow lily is budded. The little frogs peep more or less during the day, but chiefly at evening twilight, rarely in the morning. They peep at intervals. One begins, then all join in over the whole pond, and they suddenly stop all together.

If you would obtain insight, avoid anatomy.

I am pretty sure that is the myrtle-bird I see and hear on the Corner road, picking the blossoms of the maple, with the yellow crown and black throat or cheeks. It sings *pe-te-te-te-ter twe'*, emphasizing the last and repeating the second, third, and fourth fast.

The little frogs I kept three days in the house peeped at evening twilight, though they had been silent all day; never failed; swelled up their little bagpipes, transparent, and as big as a small cherry or a *large* pea. Saw a bird on the willows, very shy, which may be the indigo-bird, but I am not sure. The *Equisetum arvense* is now in bloom (the male flowers) all over the railroad embankment, coloring it yellowish (?).

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May 3. 5 A. M. — To Cliffs.

A great brassy moon going down in the west. A flock of neat sparrows, small, striped-throated, whitish over eye, on an apple tree by J. Potter's. At Hayden's orchard, quite a concert from some small sparrows, forked-tailed, many jingling together like canaries. Their note still somewhat like the chip-sparrow's. Can it be this?

Fair Haven. How cheering and glorious any landscape viewed from an eminence! For every one has its horizon and sky. It is so easy to take wide views. Snow on the mountains. The wood thrush reminds me of cool mountain springs and morning walks.

That oven-birdish note which I heard here on May 1st I now find to have been uttered by the black and white warbler or creeper. He has a habit of looking under the branches. The towhee finch is the loudest singer here now.

Does that long-drawn, interesting note, something like *ha, ha, tull-a-lull tull-a-lull*, proceed from the chickadee?[1]

Looking from the Cliff, now, about 6 A. M., the landscape is as if seen in a mirage, the Cliff being in shadow, and that in the fresh and dewy sunshine (not much dew yet). Cool sunlight. The landscape lies in a fresh morning light; the earth and water smell fresh and new; the water is marked by a few smooth streaks. The atmosphere suits the grayish-brown landscape, — the still ashy maple swamps and now nearly bare shrub

[1] [Probably the song of the white-throated sparrow, whose voice Thoreau mistook for the chickadee's in the Maine woods.]

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oaks. The white pine, left here and there over the sprout-land, is never more beautiful than with the morning light — the early sunlight and the dew — on it. (Dew comes with grass? and for it?) Before the water is rippled and the morning song of the birds is quenched.

Hear the first brown thrasher, — two of them. Minott says he heard one yesterday, but does he know it from a catbird? They drown all the rest. He says *cherruwit, cherruwit; go ahead, go ahead; give it to him, give it to him;* etc., etc., etc. Plenty of birds in the woods this morning. The huckleberry birds and the chickadees are as numerous, if not as loud, as any. The flicker taps a dead tree as some what [*sic*] uses a knocker on a door in the village street. In his note he begins low, rising higher and higher. Is it a wood pewee or a vireo that I hear, something like *pewit pewit chowy chow?* It requires so much closer attention to the habits of the birds, that, if for that reason only, I am willing to omit the gun.[1]

P. M. — Cinquefoil or five-finger (*Potentilla Canadensis*). Also the golden saxifrage (what a name!) (*Chrysosplenium Americanum*), in the meadow at Brister's Hill, in the water, in moss-like beds. It may have been in bloom some time; an obscure flower.

A cold wind from the northwest. How much are our summers retarded by the snow on the mountains? Annursnack looks green three miles off. This is an important epoch, when the distant bare hills begin to show

[1] [*Walden*, p. 234; Riv. 330.]

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green or verdurous to the eye. The earth wears a new aspect. Not tawny or russet now, but green, are such hills.

Some of the notes, the trills, of the lark sitting amid the tussocks and stubble are like my seringo-bird. May these birds that live so low in the grass be called the cricket birds? and does their song resemble the cricket's, an earth-song?

Was that a flying squirrel which the Emerson children found in his nest on the 1st of May? Heard some kind of dor-bug approaching with a hum, as I sat in a meadow this afternoon, and it struck the ground near me with as much noise as a bullet, as if some one had fired at me with an air-gun.

Evening. — The moon is full. The air is filled with a certain luminous, liquid, white light. You can see the moonlight, as it were reflected from the atmosphere, which some might mistake for a haze, — a glow of mellow light, somewhat like the light I saw in the afternoon sky some weeks ago; as if the air were a very thin but transparent liquid, not dry, as in winter, nor gross, as in summer. It has depth, and not merely distance (the sky).

Going through the Depot Field, I hear the dream frog at a distance. The little peeping frogs make a background of sound in the horizon, which you do not hear unless you attend. The former is a trembling note, some higher, some lower, along the edge of the earth, an all-pervading sound. Nearer, it is a blubbering or rather bubbling sound, such as children, who

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stand nearer to nature, can and do often make, — this and many others, remembering the frog state.[1] There is no dew (I have observed none yet). The dream of the frog sounds best at a distance, — most dreamy. The little peeper prefers a pool on the edge of a wood, which mostly dries up at midsummer, whose shore is covered with leaves and [where] twigs lie in the water, as where choppers have worked. Theirs is a clear, sharp, ear-piercing peep, not shrill, — sometimes a squeak from one whose pipe is out of order, frequently a quavering, curving (?) trill, as if of alarm (?). The sound of the dreamer frog does not fail, for one no sooner ceases than another in a different part of the landscape takes up the strain.

The sky is not so withdrawn, clear, tight, and cold as last moon. It is quite comfortable, more than during the day. No crickets are heard. The river in the west looks blue, exactly like the sky reflecting it. Is not the sky a lighter blue than in winter? The dogs bark. The rocks have not been enough warmed by day to feel decidedly warm at night.

At Hubbard's Bridge. The river still quite high. The water is calm. I hear a stertorous sound from some frog. This makes three frogs' notes that I hear. There is the moon in the south, with one bright star just beneath it, which, when the moon is in clouds, is its representative. Looking from bridge to hill, above is the moon, separated from attendant star by a bar of white clouds, below which the star shines brightly in a clearing; beneath this, bars of white clouds to the

[1] [The last four words crossed out in pencil.]

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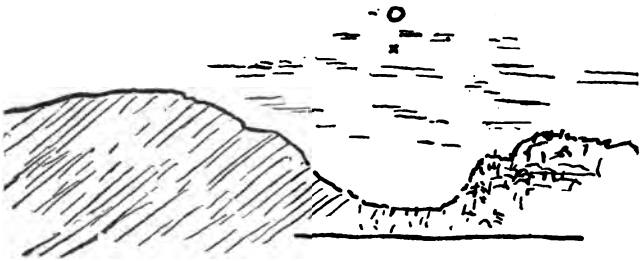
horizon. The hill and opposite woods are dark with fine effect. The little peepers have much the greatest



apparatus for peeping of any frogs that I know. Frogs are the birds of the night.

I go along the side of Fair Haven Hill. The clock strikes distinctly, showing the wind is easterly. There is a grand, rich, musical echo trembling on the air long after the clock has ceased to strike, like a vast organ, filling the air with a trembling music like a flower of sound. Nature adopts it. Beautiful is sound. The water is so calm the woods and single trees are doubled by the reflection, and in this light you cannot divide them as you walk along the river. See the spearers' lights, one northeast, one southwest, toward Sudbury, beyond Lee's Bridge, — scarlet-colored fires. From the hill the river is a broad blue stream exactly the color of the heavens which it reflects. Sit on the Cliff with comfort, in greatcoat. All the tawny and russet earth — for no green is seen on the *ground* at this hour — sending only this faint multitudinous sound (of frogs) to heaven. The vast, wild earth. The first whip-or-u-will startles me. Hear three.

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Summer is coming apace. Within three or four days the birds have come so fast I can hardly keep the run of them, — much faster than the flowers. I did not watch for the *very earliest*, however.

My little peepers — when they slept, the pulsation in their throats stopped. There was a wrinkled bag there. They begin to peep in earnest at or before sundown, and they keep it up now at 10 P. M. But I rarely hear any numbers in the morning, when they probably sleep. Heard the dreaming frogs close at hand, in the pool in the road by Hubbard's, a loud, liquid *ringing*, bubbling. One plainly answers another. Almost put my hand on one while bubbling. There is more ring to it close by, but on the whole it is not as poetic.

The salutations and commonplaces of all nations, which sound to us formal often, are always adapted to their circumstances, and grow out of their necessities. The Tartar inquires, "Has the rain been abundant? Are your flocks in prosperity? Have your mares been fruitful?" and the answer is, "All is at peace in our pastures." Serene and Biblical, and no man's invention.

M. Huc met with a family in China remarkable for hospitality.

May 4. R. W. E. tells me he does not like Haynes as well as I do. I tell him that he makes better manure than most men.

This excitement about Kossuth is not interesting to me, it is so superficial. It is only another kind of dancing or of politics. Men are making speeches to him all over the country, but each expresses only the

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thought, or the want of thought, of the multitude. No man stands on truth. They are merely banded together as usual, one leaning on another and all together on nothing; as the Hindoos made the world rest on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise, and had nothing to put under the tortoise.[1] You can pass your hand under the largest mob, a nation in revolution even, and, however solid a bulk they may make, like a hail-cloud in the atmosphere, you may not meet so much as a cobweb of support. They may not rest, even by a point, on eternal foundations. But an individual standing on truth you cannot pass your hand under, for his foundations reach to the centre of the universe. So superficial these men and their doings, it is life on a leaf or a chip which has nothing but air or water beneath. I love to see a man with a tap-root, though it make him difficult to transplant.[2] It is unimportant what these men do. Let them try forever, they can effect nothing. Of what significance the things you can forget?

A little thought is sexton to all the world.

I see the slate-colored snowbird still,— a few. What was that large olive-yellow bird on Heywood's apple trees? The female flower of the sweet-gale, red, like so many female flowers. The meadow-sweet begins to leave out. The male flowers of the maple look yellowish-scarlet, looking up to the sky. The elms are still in full blossom. The cowslip's is a vigorous growth and makes at present the most show of any flower. Leaf,

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 470, 471; *Misc.*, Riv. 273.]

[2] *Vide* [pp. 54, 55].

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stem, bud, and flower are all very handsome in their place and season. It has no scent, but speaks wholly to the eye. The petals are covered at base with a transparent, dewy (dew-like), apparently golden nectar. Better for yellows than for greens. I hear trees creak here (at Saw Mill Brook) like inn signs in the street. The singularly rough winged (?) barked elms here, which run up so high, blossom only at top. They are *very* easy to climb, the bark is so rough and furrowed and soft, affording a support to the clothes. The bark on the twigs strips up long. A kind of corky bark, but flower like the common.

The little frogs begin to peep in good earnest *toward* sundown.

May 5. 5 A. M. — Frost in night; hence the grass is wet. Hear the seringo-bird on an apple tree. I think it must be one of the species of song sparrow. Hear on the elms in the street, for the first time that I remember, the purple finch (without the crimson) singing loud, like a warbling vireo but with more variety. Hear also this morning in the village the chickadees' fine, ringing, air-possessing *tull-a-lull tull-a-lull.* Is this the third note of this bird, and confined to this season?[1] Heard it the morning of the brown thrasher. The other afternoon I could not hear the birds sing, the wind in the woods made such a noise.

3 P. M. — To little ponds.

A really warm day. I perspire in my thick coat. Hear

[1] [See p. 10.]

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the dream frogs, but fainter than by night. The aspect of the woods half a mile distant shows the state of the atmosphere. There is a very slight transparent haze on them, just enough to glass them; somewhat such a reflection and seething in the air as I have described by moonlight. The maple-tops show red with their blossoms against the higher trees. What is the color of their tops in winter? The red maples and the elms, now covered with full rich [*sic*], are now on the whole the most common and obvious blossoms. It is their season, and they are worthy of it. The one has the woods and swamps and causeways; the other, the village. My seringo-bird sounds now from the railroad like the dropping of a file, or any bit of steel, on an anvil. Saw a shad-fly. The white-bellied (?) swallow soars and sails like a hawk. Leave the Cut. The woods are now dry, and the ground feels crisp under my feet. Fires in the woods will now rage. I see their traces by the railroad. I smell the dry leaves. Nature invites fire to sweep her floors, for purification. From the high field, see smokes toward Wachusett. The shade is even agreeable to-day. I smell the pines lately; is it because they are starting? Oh, the huckleberry-bird! The *Viola pedata* budded, ready to blossom. In Stow's clearing. Every part of the world is beautiful to-day; the bright, shimmering water; the fresh, light-green grass springing up on the hills, tender, firm, moss-like before it waves; — the very faint blue sky, without distinct clouds, is least beautiful of all, having yielded its beauty to the earth; —and the fine light smokes, sometimes blue against the woods; and the tracts where the woods have been

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cut the past winter. The beautiful, ethereal, not misty, blue of the horizon and its mountains, as if painted. Now all buds may swell, methinks; now the summer may begin for all creatures. The wind appears to be a little north of west. The waters, still high, have a fine shimmering sparkle over a great part of their surface, not so large nor quite so bright as in the fall.

As I can throw my voice into my head and sing very loud and clear there, so I can throw my thought into a higher chamber, and think louder and clearer above the earth than men will understand.

The maple woods *half a mile* distant are not a bright red, but a little brighter than the oak leaves have been. It looks best from a hilltop a quarter of a mile distant, seen rising amid pines, with a light rosaceous tint in the sun, in Holden's Swamp. I can see them of a dull red a mile and a half distant. The blossom (male) of the maple has *very little* fragrance, but that agreeable. This and the elm may go together, possessing the season to careless eyes.

Now the flies are heard to buzz about you, as you sit on a rock on the hillside. How long is it since I saw geese and ducks? Methinks ever since the Great Freshet. They are swept northward with the storms, — a transient wildness. Is that a hop-hornbeam under the Cliffs which looks like a black birch? There is red-stemmed moss on the earth-covered rocks half-way down. The male flowers of the *grandidentata* begin to dry up. The young oaks on the plain have suddenly, I think within a day or two, lost all their leaves, being about to put forth new.

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In its America of enterprise and active life, does not the mind lose its adipose tissue that Knox tells of?

A tree-toad again. The outlines of Fair Haven Pond begin to appear, and the two arms that claim the island. Few birds are heard from the Cliffs now at 4 P. M. Sunrise is already their hour.

I succeed best when I *recur* to my experience not too late, but within a day or two; when there is some distance, but enough of freshness.

Saxifrage and crowfoot abundant, though I have found but one violet. The crowfoot has a sweet spring-like fragrance, like the dandelion, if you have many, but very little of it. A gloss like varnish on its thin petals. It makes a show here in the grass over warm rocks. Saxifrage still less scent.

Heard the first cricket singing, on a lower level than any bird, observing a lower tone — the sane, wise one — than all the singers. He came not from the south, but from the depths. He has felt the heats at last, — that migrates downward. The smallest of birds. The myrtle-bird again, rather tame. A pretty little crimson willow, *i. e.* its four-divided stigmas, either the *Salix tristis* or *humilis*, one to two feet high, catkins a third of an inch long, recurved. I have seen no female willow so handsome, but neither Gray nor Emerson describes its beauty. It turns greenish as it grows old. Dotted with minute crimson stigmas. In the small ponds I hear a slight bullfroggy note. The andromeda is now a brownish-green; very little of the redness left. Seen from the sun side, now the sun is getting low, it looks like a large bed of greenish-gray moss, reflecting

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the light. What has become of its red leaves? Does it shed them, and the present fresher ones not till next spring? These leaves show their under sides appressed to the stem. The sweet-fern now begins to shed its yellow pollen. The first anemones on a warm hillside west of the Island Pond. *Thalictrum anemonoides* (rue-leaved). What the shrub now leaving out at the east of the Long Pond, with sticky buds? A cherry or plum?[1] There is a dust on Walden, — where I come to drink, — which I think is the pollen of such trees and shrubs as are now in blossom, — aspens, maples, sweet-fern, etc., — food for fishes. I did not see any when I last drank here, a short time ago.

A fine scarlet sunset. As I sit by my window and see the clouds reflected in the meadow, I think it is important to have water, because it multiplies the heavens.

Evening. — To the Lee place rock.

Moon not up. The dream frog's is such a sound as you can make with a quill on water, a bubbling sound. Behind Dodd's. The spearers are out, their flame a bright yellow, reflected in the calm water. Without noise it is slowly carried along the shores. It reminds me of the light which Columbus saw on approaching the shores of the New World. There goes a shooting star down towards the horizon, like a rocket, appearing to describe a curve. The water sleeps with stars in its bosom. I see another light in the far southwest. To a stranger in the dark they would appear like light-houses on low points, lighting voyagers to our shores.

[1] Wild red cherry.

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This might be called the spearer's moon this year, if it were of use to him. Hear a pout-like sound of frogs. (The chickadee [1] says now in morning, *har* (long), *pe-e-e pe-e-e p-e-e-e*, the last trill something like *tull-a-lull lull-a-lull*.) The dream of the frogs [2] is very indistinct at a distance. Venus, the evening star, high in the sky. The spearers' light reveals the forms of trees and bushes near which it passes. When it is not seen, it makes a pillar of reddish or rosy light on the twigs above it. I see even the lamps of the village in the water, the river is so high.

As I went up the Groton road, I saw a dim light at a distance, where no house was, which appeared to come from the earth. Could it be a traveller with a lanthorn? Could it be a will-o'-the-wisp? (Who ever saw one? Are not they a piece of modern mythology?) You wonder if you will ever reach it; already it seems to recede. Is it the reflection of the evening star in water? or what kind of phosphorescence? But now I smell the burning. I see the sparks go up in the dark. — It is a heap of stumps half covered with earth, left to smoulder and consume in the newly plowed meadow, now burst forth into dull internal flames. Looks like a gipsy encampment. I sit on the untouched end of a stump, and warm me by it, and write by the light, the moon not having risen. What a strange, Titanic thing this Fire, this Vulcan, here at work in the night in this bog, far from men, dangerous to them, consuming earth,

[1] ["Myrtle-bird" is substituted in pencil for "chickadee." Thoreau afterward learned that the bird was the white-throated sparrow!]

[2] ["Toads" substituted in pencil for "frogs."]

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gnawing at its vitals! The heap glows within. Here sits hungry Fire with the forest in his mouth. On the one side is the solid wood; on the other, smoke and sparks. Thus he works. The farmer designs to consume, to destroy, this wood, remains of trees. He gives them to his dog or vulture Fire. They burn like spunk, and I love the smell of the smoke. The frogs peep and dream around. Within are fiery caverns, incrusted with fire as a cave with saltpetre. No wonder at salamanders. It suggests a creature that lives in it, generated by it. The glass men are nearer the truth than the men of science.

I hear Barrett's sawmill[1] running by night to improve the high water. Then water is at work, another devourer of wood. These two wild forces let loose against nature. It is a hollow, galloping sound; makes tearing work, taming timber, in a rude Orphean fashion preparing it for dwellings of men and musical instruments, perchance. I can imagine the sawyer, with his lanthorn and his bar in hand, standing by, amid the shadows cast by his light. There is a sonorous vibration and ring to it, as if from the nerves of the tortured log. Tearing its entrails.

I go forward. The rabbit goes off from the wood-side with a squeak and bounce. I hear him strike the ground each time. He squeaks once like an alarmed bird. The rocks are very slightly warm, perhaps because it is not cold enough to-night, and it is a very little colder in the hollows.

The moon is just rising (9.30). She has not yet freed

[1] *Vide* p. [151].

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herself from the clouds of earth and reached the clear and serene heavens.

No nighthawks heard yet.

I stand by the bubbling frogs (dreamers at a distance). They are sometimes intermittent, with a quavering. I hear betweenwhiles a little bird-like conversation between them. It is evidently their wooing.

May 6. 3 P. M. — To Conantum.

Heard the first warbling vireo this morning on the elms. This almost makes a summer. Heard also, as I sat at my desk, the unusual low of cows being driven to their country pastures. Sat all day with the window open, for the outer air is the warmest. The balm-of-Gilead was well blossomed out yesterday, and has been for three or four days probably. The woods seen a mile off in the horizon are more indistinct yesterday and to-day, these two summer-like days (it is a summer heat), the green of the pines being blended with the gray or ash of the deciduous trees; partly, perhaps, because the fine haze in the air is the color of the twigs, and partly because the buds are expanded into leaves on many; but this last cause is hardly admissible. Now the wasps have come.

My dream frog turns out to be a toad. I watched half a dozen a long time at 3.30 this afternoon in Hubbard's Pool, where they were frogging (?) lustily. They sat in the shade, either partly in the water, or on a stick; looked darker and narrower in proportion to their length than toads usually do, and moreover are aquatic. I see them jump into the ditches as I walk. After an

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interval of silence, one appeared to be gulping the wind into his belly, inflating himself so that he was considerably expanded; then he discharged it all into his throat while his body or belly collapsed suddenly, expanding his throat to a remarkable size. Was nearly a minute inflating itself; then swelled out its sac, which is rounded and reminded me of the bag to a work-table, holding its head up the while. It is whitish specked (the bag) on a dull bluish or slate ground, much bigger than all the rest of the head, and nearly an inch in diameter. It was a ludicrous sight, with their so serious prominent eyes peering over it; and a deafening sound, when several were frogging at once, as I was leaning over them. The mouth [seemed] to be shut always, and perhaps the air was expelled through the nostrils. The strain appeared prolonged as long as the air lasted, and was sometimes quavered or made intermittent, apparently by closing the orifice, whatever it was, or the blast. One, which I brought home, answers well enough to the description of the common toad (*Bufo Americanus*), though it is hardly so gray. Their piping (?) was evidently connected with their loves. Close by, it is an unmusical monotonous deafening sound, a steady blast, — not a peep nor a croak, but a *kind* of piping, — but, far away, it is a dreamy, lulling sound, and fills well the crevices of nature. Out of its place, as very near, it would be as intolerable as the thrumming of children. The plower yesterday disturbed a toad in the garden, the first I have heard of. I must catch him and compare them. Their heads are well above the water when they pipe.

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Saw a striped snake lying by the roadside as if watching for toads, though they must be scarce now, his head just on the edge of the road. The most flexible of creatures, it is so motionless it appears the most rigid, in its waving line.

The yellow willows on the causeways are now fairly leaving out. They are more forward in this respect than that early willow, or any other that I see. The trees are already a mass of green, partly concealing the yellow stems, — a tender, fresh light green. No *trees* look so forward in this respect, and, being in rows, they make the more show, their branches are so thick and numerous, close together. If some have leaves as large, they are much more scattered and make no such show. I did not observe what time the willow bark would strip and make whistles. The female maple is more crimson, the male more scarlet. The horse-chestnut buds are so advanced that they are larger than the leaves of any tree. The elder, the wild cherry, thimble-berries, sweet-briars, cultivated cherry, and early apples, etc., white birches, hazels, aspens, hornbeams, maples, etc., etc., — not quite the hickory and alder, — are opening their buds; the alders are beginning to.

It is pleasant when the road winds along the side of a hill with a thin fringe of wood through which to look into the low land. It furnishes both shade and frame for your pictures, — as this Corner road. The first *Anemone nemorosa*, wind-flower or wood anemone, its petals more slightly tinged with purple than the rue-leaved. See the ferns here at the spring curling up like the proboscis of the sphinx moth. The first *Viola*

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blanda (sweet-scented white), in the moist ground, also, by this spring. It is pretty numerous and may have been out a day or two. I think I could not find so many blue ones. It has a rather strong scent like heliotrope (?). The *Convallaria bifolia* budded. Sometimes the toad reminds me of the cricket, its note also proceeding from the ground. See now the woodchuck rollicking across a field toward his hole and tumbling into it. See where he has just dug a new hole. Their claws long and rather weak-looking for digging. The woodpeckers tapping. The first columbine (*Aquilegia Canadensis*) to-day, on Conantum. Shade is grateful, and the walker feels a desire to bathe in some pond or stream for coolness and invigoration.

Cowslips show at a distance in the meadows (Miles's). The new butter is white still, but with these *cows' lips* in the grass it will soon be yellow, I trust. This yellowness in the spring, derived from the sun, affects even the cream in the cow's bag, and flowers in yellow butter at last. Who has not turned pale at the sight of hay butter? These are the cows' lips.

The music of all creatures has to do with their loves, even of toads and frogs. Is it not the same with man?

There are odors enough in nature to remind you of everything, if you had lost every sense but smell. The fever-bush is an apothecary's shop.

The farmers are very busily harrowing and rolling in their grain. The dust flies from their harrows across the field. The tearing, toothed harrow and the ponderous cylinder, which goes creaking and rumbling over the surface, heard afar, and vying with the sphere.

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The cylinder is a simple machine, and must go into the new symbols. It is an interesting object, seen drawn across a grain-field. The willows are now suddenly of a light, fresh, tender yellowish-green. A green bittern, a gawky bird. As I return over the bridge, shadflies very numerous. Many insects now in the evening sunshine, especially over the water.

Houstonia (*Hedyotis cærulea*), bluets, now just begun. Dewey calls it Venus' Pride. Gray says truly, "a very delicate little herb, . . . producing in spring a profusion of handsome bright blue blossoms fading to white, with a yellow eye." I should say bluish-white. The dwarf andromeda (*A. calyculata*) just begun; leaves called evergreen; flowers on "one-sided leafy racemes." Methinks its leaves remain two years, and fall in the spring, the small ones continuing to grow.[1] The ground is now strewn with the old red-brown lower leaves, and only the smaller and fresher green ones remain.

The common toad, with which I compared the dream toad I brought home, has two horn-like dark marks reaching over the eyes. It is not depressed, but rather has a tubercle, on the top of the head between the eyes. It is also much wider in proportion to length, and is triangular, as I have drawn in report. Yet they are probably the same. The garden toad made the same faint chicken-like, musical croak, when I held him in my hand, with the other, and in the same manner swelling his bag. The garden toad was yellowish beneath, the other white with some small spots. The latter turned much lighter-colored, — from brown to a

[1] [This sentence is queried in the margin.]

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yellowish and light-brown green, or rather greenish-brown, — while I had him. They have a bright eye, with coppery or golden-coppery iris. It is their redeeming feature. But why do I not hear them in the garden? They appear to frequent the water first, and breed there, then hop to the gardens, and turn lighter and grow thicker.

May 7. Friday. 4.30 A. M. — To Cliffs.

Has been a dew, which wets the feet, and I see a very thin fog over the low ground, the first fog, which must be owing to the warm weather. Heard a robin singing powerfully an hour ago, and song sparrows, and the cocks. No peeping frogs in the morning, or rarely.

The toads sing (?), but not as at evening. I walk half a mile (to Hubbard's Pool, in the road), before I reach those I heard, — only two or three. The sound is uttered so low and over water; still it is wonderful that it should be heard so far. The traveller rarely perceives when he comes near the source of it, nor when he is farthest away from it. Like the will-o'-the-wisp, it will lead one a long chase over the fields and meadows to find one. They dream more or less at all hours now. I see the relation to the frogs in the throat of many a man. The full throat has relation to the distended paunch.

I would fain see the sun as a moon, more weird. The sun now rises in a rosaceous amber. Methinks the birds sing more some mornings than others, when I cannot see the reason. I smell the damp path, and derive vigor from the earthy scent between Potter's and

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Hayden's. Beginning, I may say, with robins, song sparrows, chip-birds, bluebirds, etc., I walked through larks, pewees, pigeon woodpeckers, chickadee *tull-a-lulls*, to towhees, huckleberry-birds, wood thrushes, brown thrasher, jay, catbird, etc., etc. Entered a cool stratum of air beyond Hayden's after the warmth of yesterday. The *Viola pedata* still in bud only, and the other (*q. v.*). Hear the first partridge drum. The first oven-bird. A wood thrush which I thought a dozen rods off, was only two or three, to my surprise, and betrayed himself by moving, like a large sparrow with ruffled feathers, and quirking his tail like a pewee,[1] on a low branch. Blackbirds are seen going over the woods with a chattering bound to some meadow.

A rich bluish mist now divides the vales in the eastern horizon mile after mile. (I am ascending Fair Haven.) An oval-leaved pyrola (evergreen) in Brown's pines on Fair Haven.

Cliffs. — This is the gray morning; the sun risen; a very thin mist on the landscape; the falling water smooth. Far below, a screaming jay seen flying, against the bare stems of the pines. The young oaks on the plain, the pines standing here and there, the walls in Conantum pastures seen in the sun, the little groves on the opposite side of the river lit up by it while I am [in] shade, these are memorable and belong to the hour.

Here at this hour the brown thrasher often drowns the other birds. The towhee has been a main bird for

[1] [Probably the bird was a hermit thrush, this motion of the tail being almost a proof positive. Probably, too, all the "wood thrushes" seen by Thoreau in April (see *ante*) were hermits.]

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regular morning singing in the woods for a little while. The creeper is regularly heard, too. Found the first strawberry blossoms (*Fragaria Virginiana*) on Fair Haven. The sedge grass blossom is now quite large and showy on the dry hillside where the wood has recently been cut off.

I think that birds vary their notes considerably with the seasons. When I hear a bird singing, I cannot think of any words that will imitate it. What word can stand in place of a bird's note? You would have to bury [?] it, or surround it with a *chevaux de frise* of accents, and exhaust the art of the musical composer besides with your different bars, to represent it, and finally get a bird to sing it, to perform it. It has so little relation to words. The wood thrush says *ah-tully-tully* for one strain. There appear to be one or more little warblers in the woods this morning which are new to the season, about which I am in doubt, myrtle-birds among them. For now, before the leaves, they begin to people the trees in this warm weather. The first wave of summer from the south. The purple finch (sober-colored) is a rich singer. As I said the other day, something like the warbling vireo, only louder, clearer, mellower, and more various. Bank swallows at Hayden's.

I fear that the dream of the toads will not sound so musical now that I know whence it proceeds. But I will not fear to *know*. They will awaken new and more glorious music for me as I advance, still farther in the horizon, not to be traced to toads and frogs in slimy pools.

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P. M. — To Nawshawtuct.

The vireo comes with warm weather, midwife to the leaves of the elms. I see little ant-hills in the path, already raised. How long have they been? The first small pewee sings now *che-vet*, or rather chirrups *chevet*, *tche-vet* — a rather delicate bird with a large head and two white bars on wings. The first summer yellowbirds on the willow causeway. The birds I have lately mentioned come not singly, as the earliest, but all at once, *i. e.* many yellowbirds all over town. Now I remember the yellowbird comes when the willows begin to leave out. (And the small pewee on the willows also.) So yellow. They bring summer with them and the sun, *tche-tche-tche-tcha tcha-tchar*. Also they haunt the oaks, white and swamp white, where are not leaves. On the hill I sit in the shadow of the locust trunks and branches, for want of other shade. This is a mistake in Nature, to make shade necessary before she has expanded the leaves.

The catnep is now up, with a lustrous purple tinge to the under side of its leaves. (Why should so many leaves be so painted on the under side, concealed from men's eye — only not from the insects — as much as the sculptures on the tops of columns?) There is something in its fragrance as soothing as balm to a sick man. It advances me ever to the autumn and beyond it. How full of reminiscence is any fragrance! If it were not for virtuous, brave, generous actions, could there be any sweet fragrance?

> "Only the actions of the just
> Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

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Now you may say the trees generally are *beginning* to leave out, excepting the oaks, celtis, late water willow, etc., etc. But only the willows and the balm-of-Gileads make any show in our landscape yet, — of native or wild trees, — the latter where they grow in clumps. Its catkins are five inches long.

Top of hill. — The haze is remarkably thick to-day as if all the distant western woods were on fire. (The wind west and what coolness in it most grateful.) The haze makes the western view quite rich, so many edges of woodland ridges where you see the pine tops against the white mist of the vale beyond. I count five or six such ridges rising partly above the mist, but successively more indistinct, the first only a quarter of a mile off. Of course there are no mountains. It belongs to this warm weather. The lower part of the sky is white, like a fog; only in the zenith do I see any blue. It makes the outlines of the blue water on the meadow eastward agreeably indistinct, being more nearly the color of the water itself than the land. A maple swamp in bloom, westward from this hill, is a rich sight, even like a rosy orchard in bloom. The dust flies.

I am not sure whether my first violet was the *cucullata* or *ovata*,[1] or the same with that minute one which I found prepared to blossom by the Spring Path this morning. A fern, one of the osmundas, beyond the celtis, one foot high, covered with reddish wool, unfolding its blossom (?) as it rises. The wool used for birds' nests. Might be used for other purposes? It is such weather as in summer we expect a thunder-shower after.

[1] ["I . . . whether" and "*cucullata* or" crossed out in pencil.]

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Is this smoke-like haze produced by the warm west wind meeting the still cool earth? Or is it smoke? The ground under the walnuts is richly strewn with nut-shells, broken and gnawed by squirrels, like an unswept dining-hall in early times. That little early violet close to the ground in dry fields and hillsides, which only children's eyes detect, with buds showing purple but lying so low, as if stooping to rise, or rather its stems actually bent to hide its head amid the leaves, quite unpretending. The gnaphalium, though without scent, is now a pure, dry, enduring flower and bears inspection. The first peetweet; myrtle-birds numerous. The catbird does not make the corn-planting sounds. The toads dream loudly these first warm days. A yellow-throated green frog in the river, by the hemlocks, — bright silk-green the fore part of the body, tiger-striped legs. The eyes of toads and frogs are remarkably bright and handsome, — oval pupils (?) or blacks and golden or coppery irides. The hop-hornbeam is almost in bloom. The red-wing's shoulder, seen in a favorable light, throws all epaulets into the shade. It is General Abercrombie, methinks, when they wheel partly with the red to me. The crow blackbirds make a noise like crows, and also a singular and rarely heard scream or screech. They fly with lark-like wings. We require just so much acid as the cranberries afford in the spring. The first humblebee, that prince of hummers, — *bombyle* [*sic*], looking now over the ground as if he could find something. He follows after flowers. To have your existence depend on flowers, like the bees and hummingbirds! The willow twigs now may make

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wreaths so pretty and graceful with their expanding leaves. They afford the only chaplets yet, fit to crown the fairest. The horse-chestnuts in the yards have opened their parasol-like leaves to-day, reminding me of tropical palms; and the rock maples' large buds are almost open. Such a haze as this makes a dark night.

May 8. 4.30. — The robin and the bluebird have sung for some time. The haziness is now like a sea-turn, through which the sun, shorn of beams, looks claret, and at length, when half an hour high, scarlet. You thought it might become rain. Many swallows flying in flocks *high* over the river, — the chimney swallow for one. What is the other? They sustain themselves sometimes on quivering wings, making little progress, as if to catch insects. A pretty little blossom on a willow, male and female sometimes on one catkin. The female catkins of the early willows are now expanded to two or three inches in length, making the otherwise backward tree look green. The male catkins have lost all their anthers for some time. The female maples are lengthening their stems for the keys. Some are a quite yellowish green (?), stigmas and all. A singular noise from a jay this morning. Hear the yellowbird, the creeper, and the myrtle-bird this morning, all together; they are much alike. The creeper, a faint oven-bird note; the myrtle-bird, a little more of the *s* or *ψ* in it than the yellowbird and more various. I hear the *wit er che*,[1] Maryland yellow-throat. Two gold robins; they chatter like blackbirds; the fire bursts

[1] *Vide* p. [40].

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forth on their backs when they lift their wings. A fresh scent blows off from the meadows, the river rapidly going down. The leaves of the young rock maples, which have first expanded this morning, make little crosses against the sky, — four leaves, — or stars, the leaves being finely cut. The ground was found frozen still to-day, in the shade behind Aunt's house.

P. M. — Down river to Red Bridge.

The blackbirds have a rich *sprayey* warble now, sitting on the top [of] a willow or an elm. They possess the river now, flying back and forth across it. The high-backed, elliptical stinkpot covered with leeches. They lie near the shore with their backs out of water, dry in the sun. The spotted, and especially the painted, how they love to lie in the sun on rails and rocks!

No tarts that I ever tasted at any table possessed such a refreshing, cheering, encouraging acid that literally put the heart in you and set you on edge for this world's experiences, bracing the spirit, as the cranberries I have plucked in the meadows in the spring. They cut the winter's phlegm, and now I can swallow another year of this world without other sauce. Even on the Thanksgiving table they are comparatively insipid, have lost as much flavor as beauty, are never so beautiful as in water.

The warm weather (looking back over the past days) has [come] very suddenly. One day I had a fire (which day? *Vide* back a week or two), and the next night, and each night since, I slept with my window open, as I have sat with it all day. Everything has taken a sud-

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den start within three or four days, and our thoughts are equally affected. The air has been remarkably hazy or smoky. The weather has been delightfully warm; not what you would call sultry, for there is, after all, a grateful coolness in the breeze. The haze is so thick that only the zenith is blue to-day and yesterday.

The aspens, with their young leaves, now make a show in the woods like light-green fires amid the other trees. Martins are heard over the meadows — their rich warble — and in one place they make the street alive. The white maple is covered with small leaves now, as forward or perhaps more so than the sugar maple. The cross they make is more irregular, two of the leaves being longer than the others. Is that female maple higher up the river a white one? Horse-mint is up (above ground).

The blackbirds fly in flocks and sing in concert on the willows, — what a lively, chattering concert! a great deal of chattering with many liquid and rich warbling notes and clear whistles, — till now a hawk sails low, beating the bush: and they are silent or off, but soon begin again. Do any other birds sing in such deafening concert? The red-wings, male and female. The red maple in blossom is most beautiful near to. Here too, on Red Bridge causeway; I find the yellow-birds *on the willows*. The *Salix alba* has bloomed to-day and fills the causeway with sweet fragrance, though there are yet but few flowers. Here are boys making whistles. Now no instrumental music should be heard in the streets more youthful and innocent than willow

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whistles. Its sound has something soft in it as the wood of the willow. A rather rich scent has this willow blossom.

Sundown. — To Cliffs. (No moon.)

I am most impressed by the rapidity of the changes within a week. Saw a load of rock maples on a car from the country. Their buds have not yet started, while ours are leaved out. They must have been brought from the northern part of Vermont, where is winter still. A tree, with all its roots, which has not felt the influence of spring is a most startling evidence of winter, — of the magic worked by the railroad. The young sugar maples in our streets are now green with young leaves. These trees from the north are whirled into their midst from a region of ice and snow, with not a bud yet started, at least a fortnight or three weeks more backward, not fairly awaked from their winter's sleep.

Children are digging dandelions by the roadside with a pan and a case-knife. For the first time, this evening I observe the twittering of swallows about the barns. The sun has set *in the haze*. Methinks I have heard the snipe. Now hear the lark, the song sparrow, etc. The peeper, is he not lord of sound? so tiny, yet heard farther than a man! A cool but an agreeable wind. (Going by Bear Garden.) The sounds of peeping frogs (*Hylodes*) and dreaming toads are mingled into a sort of indistinct universal evening lullaby to creation, while the wind roars in the woods for a background or sea of sound, in which — on whose bosom — these others float.

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The young birch leaves, very neatly plaited, small triangular light-green leaves, yield an agreeable sweet fragrance, just expanded and sticky, — sweet-scented as innocence. The song sparrow and the robin sing early and late. The night-warbler while it is yet pretty light. It is that kind of mirage now in which the slope of the hills appears not a position but a motion. The hills ascend, the earth rocks. Do I not hear the veery's *yorick?* The "whipp-or-u-wills" begin. When I heard the first one the other night, feeling myself on the verge of winter, I was startled as if I had heard a summer sound in the midst of winter. I hear a catbird singing within a rod among the alders, but it is too dark to see him. Now he stops and half angrily, half anxiously and inquisitively, inquires *char-char*, sounding like the caw of a crow, not like a cat.

Venus is the evening star and the only star yet visible. Starlight marks conveniently a stage in the evening, *i. e.* when the first star can be seen. Does it not coincide with the whip-poor-wills' beginning? I am struck by the blackness of the small pines at this hour, two or three feet high, on the plain below Fair Haven Hill. It is already midnight behind or within them. Is there as great a contrast in the summer, when the grass in this field is more green? Such trees are, as it were, nuclei of the night. A strong but not cold southwest wind is blowing against the rocks mercilessly, an aerial surf, having been ordered to do so. The twilight seems long this evening. Is it not made so by the haze?

Hayden tells me that when he has been to water his cattle some time since in the pool behind his house, the

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little peepers have been so thick all together as to hinder his cattle from drinking, — a hundred together. It was when the weather was cooler. Was it not for warmth, and when they were asleep in the morning?

Methinks the scent is a more primitive inquisition than the eye, more oracular and trustworthy. When I criticise my own writing, I go by the scent, as it were. The scent reveals, of course, what is concealed from the other senses. By it I detect earthiness.[1]

May 9. *Sunday Morning.* — To Trillium Woods.

Apples and cherry trees begin to look green at a distance. I see the catkin of a female *Populus tremuloides* far advanced, *i. e.* become large like the willows. These low woods are full of the *Anemone nemorosa*, half opened at this hour and gracefully drooping, — sepals with a purple tinge on the under side, now exposed. They are in beds and look like hail on the ground; their now globular flowers spot the ground white. Saw a Maryland yellow-throat, whose note I have heard before, — the little restless bird that sits low, *i. e.* on low bushes. The golden senecio, ragwort, or squaw-weed (*Senecio aureus*), whose lower or radical leaves, roundish and crenate, somewhat resemble the cowslip early in the meadows, has now got up six inches high and shows purple buds. It is the plant whose stem when broken yields that sweet scent. Low blueberry bushes and high are well budded to bloom. The bluet (sometimes at least?) begins with a kind of lilac-blue, fading through white, delicately tinged with blue, to white.

[1] [Channing, p. 299.]

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Anemones

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P. M. — To hill north of Walden.

I smell the blossoms of the willows, the row of *Salix alba* on Swamp Bridge Brook, a quarter of a mile to windward, the wind being strong. There is a delightful coolness in the wind. Reduce neck-cloth. Nothing so harmonizes with this condition of the atmosphere — warm and hazy — as the dream of the toad. The samaræ on Cheney's elms now give it a leafy appearance, or as if covered with hops, before the buds are expanded. Other elms are nearly as forward. The gray, misty-looking deciduous woods now appear to imbosom the evergreens, which before stood out distinct. It is partly to be referred now, I think, to the expanding leaves as well as the haze. They are closing in around them, and there is an indescribable change in the appearance of the evergreens. Now and for some days the west and southwest winds have prevailed. The early blueberry is almost in flower. The arbutus (?) pyrus shows red scales (?). The barren plants of the *Equisetum arvense* now shoot up rapidly on the railroad bank and make it suddenly green. *Viola ovata* in bloom. The shrub oak buds are expanding, red of various hues and mixtures, quite rich. There is a *positive* sweetness in the air from flowers and expanding leaves, a universal sweetness. A longish yellow-abdomened bee. Chickadee's phœbe note is common now, the *tull-a-lull* more rare and in mornings.

It is impossible to remember a week ago. A river of Lethe flows with many windings the year through, separating one season from another. The heavens for a few days have been lost. It has been a sort of *para-*

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dise instead. As with the seashore, so is it with the universal earth-shore, not in summer can you look far into the ocean of the ether. They who come to this world as to a watering-place in the summer for coolness and luxury never get the far and fine November views of heaven. Is not all the summer akin to a paradise? We have to bathe in ponds to brace ourselves. The earth is blue now, — the near hills, in this haze.

The yellowish-white birch catkins are now opened. The buds of the white oak are now well swollen; they are later than the black and red oaks, which are beginning to leave out. The oaks, excepting the white, are quite as early if not earlier than the hickory. A choke (?) cherry well budded by Brooks's clearing; will blossom to-morrow or next day.

The cinquefoil, which so much resembles a strawberry, comes yellow not white. Do yellow flowers often bear an edible fruit? The *Viola ovata* is one of the minutest of spring flowers, — two leaves and a blossom-bud showing the blue close to the earth. What haste to push up and open its lesser azure to the greater above! Such a disproportion of blossom to the leaves! Almost literally a pretty delicate blue flower bursting forth from the scurf of the earth. The rue-leaved anemone not for scent, but a pretty leaf. The chair flag is six or eight inches high in the water, bluish-green. Swarms of little gnats with two plumes on their heads just born on the edge of the pond. The chestnuts are perhaps more advanced than oaks. Bees know what flowers have bloomed, but they must depend mainly on the willows as yet. I am not sure but the pond is higher

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than ever. Some rich young oak buds I see, young and tender reddish leaves under scales, making buds [two] or three inches long, making a kind of cross with a fifth in the middle, — red oak, I think. There is also the number five in the form of the wood, when you cut the end of a twig. Some of the female catkins on cone-bearing willows are now more than three inches long. Tortoises out sunning, on rails, etc. Some young trees very forward in a warm place. The leaves of the maple are sharply recurved, partly so as to protect the tender parts, apparently. In such a place the scales have recurved from the hickory buds, revealing already developed branches. Saw a green snake, twenty or more inches long, on a bush, hanging over a twig with its head held forward six inches into the air, without support and motionless. What there for? Leaves generally are most beautiful when young and tender, before insects or weather has defaced them.

These are the warm-west-wind, dream-frog, leafing-out, willowy, haze days. Is not this summer, whenever it occurs, the vireo and yellowbird and golden robin being here? The young birch leaves reflect the light in the sun.

Mankind seen in a dream. The gardener asks what kind of beans he shall plant. Nobody is looking up into the sky. *In our woods* it is the aspens now and the birches that show their growth at a distance. It was in such a season and such a wind that the crow brought the corn from the southwest. Our eyes are turned to the west and southwest. It grows somewhat clearer; a cloud, threatening rain, coming up in the west. The

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veiny leaves of the hawkweed appear. The *Salix tristis* is in bloom. Saw pigeons in the woods, with their inquisitive necks and long tails, but few representatives of the great flocks that once broke down our forests. Heard the night warbler. Our moods vary from week to week, with the winds and the temperature and the revolution of the seasons. The first shad-bush, Juneberry, or service-berry (*Amelanchier Canadensis*), in blossom. The first *Viola pedata* and also, in a low place, the first *Viola cucullata*. That I observed the first of May was a *V. ovata*, a variety of *sagittata*. Saw one of the peeping frogs this afternoon, sitting on a dead leaf on the surface of the water. The color of a white oak leaf at present, so that it is hard to detect one, — much lighter and more decidedly fawn-colored than those I had. They will peep on the sideboard. The clumps of alders now look greenish with expanding leaves. The haze is now going off before a coming shower. The bluebird's warble is soon in a great measure drowned by the notes of new birds.

May 10. This Monday the streets are full of cattle being driven up-country, — cows and calves and colts. The rain is making the grass grow apace. It appears to stand upright, — its blades, — and you can almost see it grow. For some reason I now remember the autumn, — the succory and the goldenrod. We remember autumn to best advantage in the spring; the finest aroma of it reaches us then. Are those the young keys of sugar maples that I see? The Canada (?) (N. Brooks's) plum in bloom, and a cherry tree. How

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closely the flower follows upon, if it does not precede, the leaf! The leaves are but calyx and escort to the flower. Some beds of clover wave.

Some look out only for the main chance, and do not regard appearances nor manners; others — others regard these mainly. It is an immense difference. I feel it frequently. It is a theme I must dwell upon. There is an aurora borealis to-night, and I hear a snoring, praying sound from frogs in the river, baser and less ringing and sonorous than the dreamers.

May 11. Sunrise, — merely a segment of a circle of rich amber in the east, growing brighter and brighter at one point. There is no rosy color at this moment and not a speck in the sky, and now comes the sun without pomp, a bright liquid gold. Dews come with the grass. There is, I find on examining, a small, clear drop at the end of each blade, quite at the top on one side.

The *Salix alba* has a *spicier* fragrance than the earliest willows. We have so much causeway planted with willows, — set with them on each side to prevent its washing away, — that they make a great show, and are obvious now before other trees are so advanced. The birches at a distance appear as in a thin green veil, in their expanding leaves.

P. M. — *Kossuth here.*

The hand-organ, when I am far enough off not to hear the friction of the machinery, not to see or be reminded of the performer, serves the grandest use for

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me, deepens my existence. Heard best through walls and obstructions. These performers, too, have come with the pleasant weather and the birds.

I think I saw a female yellowbird yesterday; its note different from the male's, somewhat like the night warbler's. They come a little later than the males. The larches are leafing out.

May 12. Morning. — Swallows (I suppose barn) flying low over the Depot Field, a barren field, and sitting on the mulleins. Bobolinks.

Currants and gooseberries are in bloom in the garden. The mountain-ash leafed out as much as two days ago. The elms have been leafing out for two or three days. Sugar maples on the common are in blossom. Hear the peepers in the rain to-night (9.30), but not the dream toads.

May 13. The best men that I know are not serene, a world in themselves. They dwell in form. They flatter and study effect, only more finely than the rest. The world to me appears uninhabited. My neighbors select granite for the underpinning of their houses and barns; they build their fences of stone; but they do not themselves rest on an underpinning of granite. Their sills are rotten. What stuff is the man made of who is not coexistent in your thought with the purest and subtlest truth? While there are manners and compliments we do not meet. I accuse my finest acquaintances of an immense frivolity. They do not teach me the lessons of honesty and sincerity that the brute beasts do, or of

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steadiness and solidity that the rocks do.[1] I cannot associate with those who do not understand me.

Rain to-day and yesterday, with fires in house.. The birds — sparrows and yellowbirds — seeking shelter in the wood-pile.

Where are the men who dwell in thought? Talk, — that is palaver! at which men hurrah and clap! The manners of the bear are so far good that he does not pay you any compliments.

P. M. — To Walden in rain.

A May storm, yesterday and to-day; rather cold. The fields are green now, and the cows find good feed. The female *Populus grandidentata*, whose long catkins are now growing old, is now leafing out. The flowerless (male?) ones show half-unfolded silvery leaves. Both these and the aspens are quite green (the bark) in the rain. A young, slender maple-like bush from four to ten feet high just leafing out and in blossom, their few scarlet or crimson blossoms in the rain very handsome. It answers to the description of the red maple, but is it not different? I see an oak against the pines, apparently a red oak, now decidedly in the gray, — a light breaking through mist. All these expanding leaves and flower-buds are much more beautiful in the rain, — covered with clear drops. They have lost some of their beauty when I have shaken the drops off. They who do not walk in the woods in the rain never behold them in their freshest, most radiant and blooming beauty. The white birch is a very handsome object, with its golden tassels three inches long, hanging directly down,

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 470; *Misc.*, Riv. 272.]

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amid the just expanding yellowish-green leaves, their perpendicularity contrasting with the direction of the branches, geometry mixed with nature. The catkins, beaten down by the rain, also strew the ground. The shrub oaks, covered with rain-drops, are very handsome, masses of variegated red-budded tassels and opening leaves, some redder, some lighter green or yellowish. They appear more forward than the oak trees. The red and black oaks are more forward than the white, which last is just opening its buds. The sweet-fern shows minute green leaves expanding. The shad-blossom with pinkish scales, or Emerson calls them "purple or faint crimson" "stipules." Botryapium (?). The amelanchiers (*Botryapium*, June-berry, which I suppose is the taller, and *ovalis* (Emerson), swamp sugar-pear, the shorter and more crowded) are now the prevailing flowers in the woods and swamps and sprout-lands, and a very beautiful, delicate flower the former is, with its purplish stipules and delicate drooping white blossoms, — so large and graceful a tree or bush. The shad-blossom days in the woods. The pines have started, white pines the most. These last are in advance of the white oak. The low early blueberry (*Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum*) (*V. tenellum* Big.) is just in blossom, and the *Cerasus Virginiana*, dwarf choke-cherry.

The birds are silent and in their coverts, excepting the black and white creepers and the jay and a brown thrasher. You know not what has become of all the rest. Channing heard the quail yesterday. The cowslips, in rounded bunches a foot in diameter, make a

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splendid show, even fresher and brighter, methinks, in the rain. The *Viola pedata* and *ovata* now begin to be abundant on warm, sandy slopes. The leaves of the lupine, six inches high, are handsome, covered with rain-drops.

May 14. *Hastily* reviewing this Journal, I find the flowers to have appeared in this order since the 28th of April (perhaps *some note* in my Journal has escaped me):[1] —

Acer rubrum	April	28	male; a female 30th; first date is perhaps early enough for both.
Populus grandidentata		29	
Epigæa repens		30	(April 25, '51).
Sweet-gale		30	probably a *day* or *two* before.
Viola ovata	May	1	(April 25, '51).
Potentilla Canadensis		3	
Chrysosplenium Americanum		3	this may have bloomed *two* or *three* days before.
Salix tristis or *humilis*		5	
Sweet-fern		5	
Thalictrum anemonoides		5	
Populus balsamifera		5	two inches long.
Anemone nemorosa		6	
Viola blanda		6	perhaps the day before.
Aquilegia Canadensis		6	
Hedyotis cærulea		6	(April 25, '51).
Andromeda calyculata		6	
Fragaria Virginiana		7	
Benzoin odoriferum		7	probably now (May 1, '51).
Ostrya		8	begins.

[1] The Latin Gray's. By last of June, '51 is apparently three or four days earlier than '52.

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Salix alba	May	8	
Betula populifolia		9	
Amelanchier Canadensis		9	
Viola pedata		9	probably a *day* or *two* before.
V. cucullata		9	did not examine where they grow.
Acer saccharinum		10	probably some days earlier.
Canada (?) plum in gardens		10	
Rubus triflorus?		10	probably about this (ripe July 1).
Cultivated cherry		10	
Fraxinus Americana when?			
Currants		12	
Gooseberries in garden		12	
Ribes hirtellum? The wild; are they one?			
Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum		13	
Cerasus Pennsylvanica?		13	
Betula papyracea, *B. excelsa*, *B. lenta* } when?			

Did not observe so *very* carefully the first common elm and first red maple, but Cheney's and white (?) maple at bridge instead; yet accurately enough. *Perhaps* the wild gooseberry and some Solomon's-seal and other violets and birches and the hornbeam and the yellow lily in some places are in bloom now!

BIRDS SINCE 28TH APRIL

Saw the last *Fringilla hyemalis* May 4.

First

Savannah (?) [1] sparrow May 1 or a day or two before.

[1] ["Seringo" in pencil written over "Savannah" and "Bay-winged" under.]

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Ground robin	May	1	
Catbird		1	
Black and white creeper		1	
Purple finch		1	
Myrtle-bird		2	
Chipping sparrow		2	
Indigo-bird (?)		2	
Brown thrasher		3	
Whip-poor-will		3	
Warbling vireo		6	
Green bittern		6	
Oven-bird		7	
Bank swallow		7	
Small pewee		7	
Summer yellowbird		7	
Peetweet		7	
Chimney swallow		8	
Maryland yellow-throat		8	
Golden robin		8	
Martins		8	probably long before.
Snipe (?)		8	
Night-warbler		8	
Yorrick (?)		8	
Pigeon or turtle dove		9	
Female yellowbird		10	
Bobolink		12	
Quail		12	

Snow in hollows?	April	28	
Saw frog spawn		28	
Rushes at Second Division one foot high, highest of grass-like herbs		29	
A *large* water-bug		29	
Heard toad (dreaming)		30	
Bull(?)frog (saw him)		30	
Flies buzz outdoors			

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Gooseberry leaves (earliest of leaves?)	April 30	
Sit without fire to-night. Spearing.		
Chickadee's *tull-a-lull*	May 4	
First cricket on Cliff	5	
Shad-fly	5	
Toad in garden	5	
Wasps	6	
Willows suddenly green	6	
Cows going up-country		
Many trees *just beginning* to expand leaves	6	
First fog, very slight		
Ant-hills	7	
Humblebee	7	
Partridge drums	7	
Stinkpot tortoise	8	How much earlier?
Birch leaves, sweet-scented	8	
Ground still frozen in some places	8	
Barn swallows twitter	8	
Apple and cherry trees begin to show green	9	
Elms darkened with samaræ		
A green snake	9	
Reduce neck-cloth		
Clover waves	10	
Frogs snore in the river	10	
One oak in the gray	13	
Pines start	13	
A May storm	13	

These pages do not contain the earliest phenomena of the spring, for which see the previous journal, as far as observed.

P. M. — To Second Division.

A foul day. One scent of golden senecio recalls the

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meadows of my golden age. It is like sweet-briar a little.

First kingbird. Its voice and flight relate it to the swallow. The maple-keys are already formed, though the male blossoms (on different trees) are not withered. Going over the Corner causeway, the willow blossoms fill the air with a sweet fragrance, and I am ready to sing, Ah! willow, willow! These willows have yellow bark, bear yellow flowers and yellowish-green leaves, and are now haunted by the summer yellowbird and Maryland yellow-throat. They see this now conspicuous mass of yellowish verdure at a distance and fly to it. Single large willows at distance are great nosegays of yellow. This orchard precedes the peach and apple weeks. The *Salix nigra* (?) is leafing out now with its catkins appearing. The sounds and sights — as birds and flowers — heard and seen at those seasons when there are fewest are most memorable and suggestive of poetic associations. The trillium is budded. The *Uvularia sessilifolia*, a drooping flower with tender stems and leaves; the latter curled so as to show their under sides hanging about the stems, as if shrinking from the cold. The *Ranunculus bulbosus* shows its yellow by this spring thus early (Corner Spring). Apparently it is the leaves of this, and not the geranium, that are so common and early. Here is half an acre of skunk-cabbage leaves. It looks like a garden in the midst of the trees of the swamp. The cowslip even smells a little like the skunk-cabbage with which it grows. The grass is now whitened with bluets; the fields are green, and the roadsides. (I am on the C. Miles road.) Now is

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the season to travel. The deciduous trees are rapidly investing the evergreens, making the woods rich and bosky by degrees. The robin sings this louring day. They sang most in and about that great freshet storm. The song of the robin is most suggestive in cloudy weather. I have not heard any toads during this rain (of which this is the third day), and very few peepers. A man wishes me to find a lead mine for him somewhere within three miles from this point (Marshal Miles's). The discoverer died suddenly about seven years ago, a month after the discovery, and revealed not the locality. Wanted to know where it grew! The beautiful birch catkins hang down four inches. Saw a whip-poor-will sitting in the path in woods on the mill road, — the brown mottled bird. It flutters off blindly, with slow, soft flight. Most birds are silent in the storm. Hear the robin, oven-bird, night warbler, and, at length, the towhee's *towee*, chickadee's *phœbe*, and a preluding thrasher and a jay. The *Saxifraga Pennsylvanica* with the golden saxifrage and cowslip. The mayflowers, which I plucked to-day, surpass all flowers hitherto in fragrance; peeping up from amid the leaves, they perfume the roadside. A strawberry by the meadow-side, probably the other species. This weather has produced fungi in the path. Anemones now in their prime. The bear-berry (*Arbutus Uva-Ursi*) in bloom, a neat bell-like white flower with a red contracted rim, clear pearly and red, a reddish tinge and red lips, transparent at base.

Most men can be easily transplanted from here there, for they have so little root, — no tap-root, — or their

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roots penetrate so little way, that you can thrust a shovel quite under them and take them up, roots and all.[1]

On the 11th, when Kossuth was here, I looked about for shade, but did not find it, the trees not being leaved out. Nature was not prepared for great heats.

The barren flowers of the gnaphalium (*plantaginеum?* no nerve to leaves), now three or four inches high, white, dotted with reddish anthers, like a diamond set in pearls, — very dry and pure and pearly like a breastpin.

That early willow at end of Corner Bridge has now female catkins on particular branches[2] at same time with leaves expanding. These are already serrulate and lighter beneath. The catkins are about an inch long (longer than the male were); ovaries stalked; rather downy scales, brown, rounded; stigmas distinctly two-divided and indistinctly four-divided; stem downy. Is it Bigelow's swamp willow?

Found four or five early grass-like plants or grasses or sedges. I think one the field rush (*Juncus campestris*).

May 16. The last four days have been a May storm, and this day is not quite fair yet. As I remember, there was the long storm and freshet near the end of April, then the warm, pleasant, hazy days, then this May storm, cooler but not cold as the first.

P. M. — To Conantum.

I think I may say that the buttercup (bulbous crow-

[1] [See p. 16.] [2] Another tree?

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foot) which I plucked at the Corner Spring would have blossomed to-day. The *Gnaphalium plantagineum* has a tender, springlike scent. The clustered purple buds of the senecio are very common in the meadows. The bees on the *Salix alba*, the prevailing one now in blossom, hum a further advance into summer. The American water cress (*Cardamine Pennsylvanica*) in blossom. The dwarf andromeda's leaf-buds are just starting. The dense beds of this plant resound with the hum of honey-bees. There is enough of this early flower to make up for deficiencies elsewhere at this season. The meadows ring with the bobolink's strain. I do not observe the female yet. Here is a bird's nest by the ditch-side which some animal has robbed, and an egg is fallen into the water. The first I have found this season. The air is sweet with fragrance. I have not seen any speckled frogs before to-day. The bobolink sits on a hardhack, swaying to and fro, uncertain whether to begin his strain, — dropping a few bubbling notes by way of prelude, — with which he overflows. There are many insects now. I was ready to say that I had seen no more beautiful flower than the dandelion. That has the vernal scent. How many flowers have no peculiar, but only this simple vernal, fragrance?

The sessile-leaved bellwort, with three or four delicate pale-green leaves with reflexed edges, on a tender-looking stalk, the single modest-colored flower gracefully drooping, neat, with a fugacious, richly spiced fragrance, facing the ground, the dry leaves, as if unworthy to face the heavens. It is a beautiful sight, a pleasing discovery, the first of the season, — growing in

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a little straggling company, in damp woods or swamps. When you turn up the drooping flower, its petals make a perfect geometrical figure, a six-pointed star. These faint, fugacious fragrances are pleasing. You are not always quite sure that you perceive any. In the swamp at end of Hubbard's Grove. Here are a million *Anemone nemorosa*. The inconspicuous white blossom of the gold-thread is detected amid them, but you are more struck by the bright-golden thread of its root when you pull it up. The *Viola ovata* is now very common, but rather indistinct in the grass, in both high and low land, in the sod where there is yet but little grass. The earth reflects the heavens in violets. The whole earth is fragrant as a bouquet held to your nose. I distinguish Bigelow's *Pyrus ovalis* (swamp) and *Botryapium* (wood), the former now downy, with smaller racemes, a shorter shrub, the other larger in most respects, if not all, with smooth aspen-colored leaves. Think it was the last I first plucked, though they apparently came together. *Vide* back. Peach trees in blossom. I have not walked to Lincoln lately; so have not watched their opening. It must have been some days ago. The apple buds show red. The trees are gradually leafing out and investing the evergreens. The high blueberry on high land will blossom fully in a day or two. Pretty sure I heard a hummingbird about the columbines. Can now pluck a sprig of fresh sweet-briar and feed my senses with that. I begin to hesitate about walking through some fields on account of the grass. Rye has been five or six inches high for some time. Methinks the columbine *here* is more remarkable for growing out

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of the seams of the rocks than the saxifrage, and perhaps better deserves the latter name. It is now in its prime, ornamental for nature's rockwork. It is a beautiful sight to see large clusters of splendid scarlet and yellow flowers growing out of a seam in the side of this gray cliff. I observe some very *pale* blue *Viola cucullata* in the meadows. The *Arum triphyllum* in bloom and the nodding trillium budded. The black ash is now in flower (and some out of flower), and the male white ash in Miles's swamp. Is the fever-bush dead, that its wood looks so dry and its flower-buds do not expand?[1] Some of the *Gnaphalium plantagineum* have a yellow tip to the blossoms. Which is it? Male or female?

I hear few peepers to-day and no toads. The *Anemone nemorosa* are half closed, showing the purple under sides of the petals, but all the rue-leaved are open; but they are not so handsome open, notwithstanding their pretty leaves and yellow stamens, as the purple buds of the other. Some of these are wholly purple and their leaves a rich brown.

The muskrat has piled his shells high up the bank this year, on account of the freshet. Even our river shells will have some black, purple, or green tints, telling of distant skies, like shells from the Indies. How did these beautiful rainbow tints get into the shell of the fresh-water clam buried in the mud at the bottom of our dark river? Even the sea-bottom tells of the upper skies.

The tupelo tree is as late as, or later than, the white

[1] Yes, dead.

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oak to leaf out. What is that grass in Conant's orchard in bloom? Early sedge? Here a woodchuck has dug out a bushel of sharp stones on a hillside, as big as your fist. The thrasher has a sort of laugh in his strain which the catbird has not. The sun comes out in patches somewhat like the expanding oak leaves. This gleam of sunshine, an hour or more before sundown (I am on the top of Conantum), on the tender foliage of Garfield's elms and of other trees, from behind a dark cloud in the west. Nature letting her sun shine by degrees, holding a veil of cloud before her tender plants. The patches of ground plowed and planted look fresh after the rain and of a dark-brown color. Even this nakedness is agreeable.

This will be the week of the oaks in the gray, when the farmers must plant away [?]. The bass is very conspicuous now, with its light yellow-green leaves, more forward than most. I see a hundred young apple trees come up in cow-dung. The flower-like leaves of the shrub oaks now, so red! A young of the painted tortoise, almost exactly circular and one inch in diameter, run over by a wheel in the road on the causeway.

Here on this causeway is the sweetest fragrance I have perceived this season, blown from the newly flooded meadows. I cannot imagine what there is to produce it. No nosegay can equal it. It is ambrosially, nectareally, fine and subtile, for you can see naught but the water, with green spires of meadow grass rising above it. Yet no flower from the Islands of the Blessed could smell sweeter. Yet I shall never know whence it

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comes. Is it not all water-plants combined? A fine, delicious fragrance, which will come to the senses only when it will, — willful as the gales. I would give something to know of it. How it must attract all birds and insects! Can it be the willow over my head? I think not.

I hear the peepers *and toads again* this evening. It *gradually* clears up at the end of this May storm.

May 17. My seringo-bird is reddish-brown with a spot on the breast and other marks, two whitish lines on back, and some white in tail; runs in the grass, so that you see nothing of it where the grass is very low; and sings standing on a tuft of grass and holding its head up the while.

P. M. — To Loring's Pond.

Decidedly fair weather at last; a bright, breezy, flowing, *washing* day. I see that dull-red grass whose blades, having risen above the surface of the water, lie flat on it in close and conspicuous flakes, making a right angle with the part in the water. Perhaps a slightly rosaceous tint to it.

The different color of the water at different times would be worth observing. To-day it is full of light and life, the breeze presenting many surfaces to the sun. There is a sparkling shimmer on it. It is a deep, dark blue, as the sky is clear. The air everywhere is, as it were, full of the rippling of waves. This pond is the more interesting for the islands in it. The water is seen running behind them, and it is pleasant to know that it penetrates quite behind and isolates the land you

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see, or to see it apparently flowing out from behind an island with shining ripples.

To-day the cinquefoils (the earliest one) on the hillsides shine in the sun. Their brightness becomes the day. That is a beautiful footpath through the pitch pines on the hillside north of this pond, over a carpet of tawny pine leaves, so slippery under your feet. Why do not men sprinkle these over their floors instead of sand? The sun on the young foliage of birches, alders, etc., on the opposite side of the pond has an enchanting effect. The sunshine has a double effect. The new leaves abet it, so fresh and tender, not apprehending their insect foes. Now the sun has come out after the May storm, how bright, how full of freshness and tender promise and fragrance is the new world! The woods putting forth new leaves; it is a memorable season. So hopeful! These young leaves have the beauty of flowers. The shrub oaks are just beginning to blossom. The forward leaves and shoots of the meadow-sweet, beneath the persistent dead flowers, make a very rich and conspicuous green now along the fences and walls. The conspicuous white flowers of the two kinds of shad-blossom spot the hillsides at a distance. This is the only bush or tree whose flowers are sufficiently common and large at this time (to-day), except the *Salix alba* and the peach (the choke-cherry is rare), to make a show now, as the apples will soon. I see dark pines in the distance in the sunshine, contrasting with the light fresh green of the deciduous trees.

There is life in these fresh and varied colors, life in the motion of the wind and the waves; all make it a

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flowing, washing day. It is a good day to saunter. The female crimson flowers of the sweet-gale are still conspicuous. Is that the shepherd's-purse and the speedwell[1] that I found in blossom? Those commonest cockle(?)-shells are holding on to the rocks under water by their feet in Fort Pond Brook. Wood tortoises are numerous in the fields to-day. Saw a young one two and a half inches diameter. Do I smell the young birch leaves at a distance? Most trees are beautiful when leafing out, but especially the birch. After a storm at this season, the sun comes out and lights up the tender expanding leaves, and all nature is full of light and fragrance, and the birds sing without ceasing, and the earth is a fairyland. The birch leaves are so small that you see the landscape through the tree, and they are like silvery and green spangles in the sun, fluttering about the tree. Bridged the brook with help of an alder loop and a rider. Are they not grandidentatas on Annursnack which show so white at this distance like shad-blossoms? Does not summer begin after the May storm? What is that huckleberry with sticky leaf-buds and just expanding leaves covered with a yellow waxy matter? The first *veery* note.

Methinks they were turtle doves which I saw this afternoon baited to a pigeon-place. They fly like a pigeon, — a slender, darting bird. I do not surely know them apart.

To-night I hear a new dreamer, a frog, — that sprayey note which perhaps I have referred to the midsummer frog. That praying or snoring sound also I hear.

[1] It is either the smooth or the procumbent, probably the first.

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May 18. The rhodora in blossom, a delicate-colored flower.

P. M. — To Cliffs.

Frog or toad spawn in a pool in long worm-like or bowel-like strings, sometimes coiled up spirally.

It is fine clear atmosphere, only the mountains blue. A slight seething but no haze. Shall we have much of *this* weather after this? There is scarcely a flock of cloud in the sky. The heaven is now broad and open to the earth in these longest days. The world can never be more beautiful than now, for, combined with the tender fresh green, you have this remarkable clearness of the air. I doubt if the landscape will be any greener.

The landscape is most beautiful looking towards the sun (in the orchard on Fair Haven) at four. First, there is this green slope on which I sit, looking down between the rows of apple trees just being clothed with tender green, — sometimes underneath them to the sparkling water, or over through them, or seeing them against the sky. Secondly, the outline of this bank or hill is drawn against the water far below; the river still high, a beautifully bright sheen on the water there, though it is elsewhere a dull slaty-blue color, a sober rippled surface. A fine sparkling shimmer in front, owing to the remarkable clearness of the atmosphere (clarified by the May storm?). Thirdly, on either side of the wood beyond the river are patches of bright, tender, yellowish, velvety green grass in meadows and on hillsides. It is like a short furred mantle now and bright as if it had the sun on it. Those great fields of green affect me as did those early green blades by the Corner Spring,

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— like a fire flaming up from the earth. The earth proves itself well alive even in the skin. No scurf on it, only a browner color on the barren tops of hills. Fourthly, the forest, the dark-green pines, wonderfully distinct, near and erect, with their distinct dark stems, spiring tops, regularly disposed branches, and silvery light on their needles. They seem to wear an aspect as much fresher and livelier as the other trees, — though their growth can hardly be perceptible yet, — as if they had been washed by the rains and the air. They are now being invested with the light, sunny, yellowish-green of the deciduous trees. This tender foliage, putting so much light and life into the landscape, is the remarkable feature at this date. The week when the deciduous trees are generally and conspicuously expanding their leaves. The various tints of gray oaks and yellowish-green birches and aspens and hickories, and the red or scarlet tops where maple keys are formed (the blossoms are now over), — these last the high color (rosaceous?) in the bouquet. And fifthly, I detect a great stretch of high-backed, mostly bare, grassy pasture country between this and the Nashua, spotted with pines and forests, which I had formerly taken for forest uninterrupted. And finally, sixthly, Wachusett rising in the background, slightly veiled in bluish mist, — toward which all these seem to slope gradually upward, — and those grassy hillsides in the foreground, seen but as patches of bare grassy ground on a spur of that distant mountain.

This afternoon the brown thrashers are very numerous and musical. They plunge downward when they

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leave their perch, in a peculiar way. It is a bird that appears to make a business of singing for its own amusement. There is great variety in its strains. It is not easy to detect any repetition. The wood thrush, too, is pretty sure to be heard in a walk. Some shrub oaks are beginning to blossom. I hear my second cricket on the face of the Cliffs, clear and distinct, — only one. The shrub oaks on the plain show a little red with their buds and young leaves. The crowfoot shines on the rocks.

At evening the water is quite white, reflecting the white evening sky, and oily smooth. I see the willows reflected in it, when I cannot see their tops in the twilight against the dark hillside. The first bat by the riverside. The praying or snoring frog, the peepers (not so common as lately), the toads (not many), and sometimes my midsummer frog, — all together. The spearers are out to-night.

These days the golden robin is the important bird in the streets, on the elms.

May 19. Up to about the 14th of May I watched the progress of the season very closely, — though not so carefully the earliest birds, — but since that date, both from poor health and multiplicity of objects, I have noted little but what fell under my observation. The pear trees are in bloom before the apples. The cherries appear to have been blasted by the winter. The lilac has begun to blossom. There was the first lightning we have noticed this year, last Sunday evening, and a thunder-storm in Walpole, N. H. Light-

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ning here this evening and an aurora in form of a segment of a circle.

May 20. P. M. — To Corner Spring.

So many birds that I have not attended much to any of late. A barn swallow accompanied me across the Depot Field, methinks attracted by the insects which I started, though I saw them not, wheeling and tacking incessantly on all sides and repeatedly dashing within a rod of me. It is an agreeable sight to watch one. Nothing lives in the air but is in rapid motion.

Now is the season of the leafing of the trees and of planting. The fields are white with houstonias, as they will soon be yellow with buttercups. Perchance the beginning of summer may be dated from the fully formed leaves, when dense shade (?) begins. I will see. High blueberries at length. It is unnecessary to speak of them. All flowers are beautiful. The *Salix alba* is about out of bloom. Pads begin to appear, though the river is high over the meadows.[1] A caterpillars' nest on a wild cherry. Some apple trees in blossom; most are just ready to burst forth, the leaves being half formed. I find the fever-bush in bloom, but apparently its blossoms are now stale. I must observe it next year. They were fresh perhaps a week ago. Currants in bloom by Conant's Spring. Are they natives of America? A lady's-slipper well budded and now white. The *Viola ovata* is of a deep purple blue, is darkest and has most of the *red* in it; the *V. pedata* is smooth and pale-blue, delicately tinged with purple reflections; the *cucullata*

[1] *Vide* p. [71].

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is more decidedly blue, slaty-blue, and darkly striated. The white violets by the spring are rather scarce now. The red oak leaves are very pretty and finely cut, about an inch and three quarters long. Like most young leaves, they are turned back around the twig, parasol-like. The farmers apprehend frosts these nights. A purplish gnaphalium with three-nerved leaves.

May 21. Morning by river.

A song sparrow's nest and eggs so placed in a bank that none could tread on it; bluish-white, speckled. Also a robin's nest and eggs in the crotch of a maple. Methinks birds that build amid the small branches of trees wait for the leaves to expand.[1] The dew hangs on the grass like globules of quicksilver. Can I tell by it if it has rained in the night? I *hear that it has.*

P. M. — The black oak is just beginning to blossom. The earlier apple trees are in bloom, and resound with the hum of bees of all sizes and other insects. To sit under the first apple tree in blossom is to take another step into summer. The apple blossoms are so abundant and full, white tinged with red; a rich-scented Pomona fragrance, telling of heaps of apples in the autumn, perfectly innocent, wholesome, and delicious. On hillsides cut off two years ago, the red oaks now contrast at a little distance with the yellowish-green birches. The latter are covered with green lice, which cover me.

The catbird sings like a robin sometimes, sometimes

[1] [This sentence is queried in the margin.]

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like a blackbird's sprayey warble. There is more of squeak or mew, and also of clear *whistle*, than in the thrasher's note.

Nemopanthes in bloom; leaves three quarters of an inch. Sand cherry also, fully. Young blueberries everywhere in bloom, and *Viola pedata* along the woodland paths, in high land. Sorrel in bloom, beginning. I am eager to taste a handful.

May 22. Saturday. On my way to Plymouth, looked at Audubon in the State-House. Saw painted the *red* berries of the *Arum triphyllum*. The pigeon is more red on the breast and more blue than the turtle dove. The female (and male?) wood thrush spotted the whole length of belly; the hermit thrush not so. The seringo-bird cannot be the Savannah sparrow. The piping plover has a big head, white breast, and ring neck.

Two kinds of bluets in New York Report.

5 P. M. — Plymouth.

The hill whence Billington discovered the pond. The field plantain in blossom and abundant here. A chickweed in bloom in Watson's garden. Is it the same that was so early? A yellow flower, apparently a hieraceum, just ready to blossom. The four-leaved loosestrife, with dark leaves, shows its flower-buds on the ends of its threads. The mayweed is ready to blossom.[1] The German forget-me-not reminded me of my little blue flower in the brook.

[1] Was it not whiteweed?

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May 23. To Billington Sea at sunrise.

The purple finch sings like a canary and like a robin. Huckleberry leaves here, too, are sticky, and yellow my fingers. *Pyrus arbutifolia* in bloom. The low, spreading red cedars which come abruptly to naught at top suggest that they be used for posts with the stubs of branches left, as they often are. The bayberry is late, just beginning to leaf. The buttercup season has arrived here. Mrs. Watson says they have no bluets nor wild pinks (catchfly) here. Some ponds have outlets; some have not. So some men. Singular that so many ponds should have connection with the sea. The inkberry is late. The red-eyed vireo is a steady singer, sitting near the top of a tree a long time alone, — the robin of the woods, — as the robin sings at morning and evening on an elm in the village.

It is worth the while to go a little south to anticipate nature at home. I am now covered with down from the tender foliage, walking in the woods in the morning. Hear the hollow, spitting, *tunk tunk* sound of frogs in the morning, which tells of sultry nights, though we have not had them yet. The *Viola lanceolata* here. *Corema Conradii* in the cemetery, just out of bloom, — broom crowberry, from κόρημα, a broom, — a rare plant which I have seen at Provincetown. The *Empetrum nigrum*, or black crowberry, is found at the White Mountains. The buck-bean in bloom. What is that linear-leaved, small pink-purple flower which they say grows about the stones in a walk? Beach plum ready to bloom. Young oak leaves red above and light below, with a red edge only, handsome as flowers.

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P. M. — To Great South Pond.

A brown spotted snake, two feet or more long, light-colored beneath, with blotchy dark-brown spots above like this:[1] —

The trientalis in bloom. The dandelions close at eve, so that you cannot find those that starred the meadow. Woods extensive but small and low, soil sandy; no variety in the landscape. Woods and deer because the soil is sandy and unfit for cultivation.

May 24. The cooing of a dove reminded me of an owl this morning. Counted just fifty violets (*pedata*) in a little bunch, three and a half by five inches, and as many buds, there being six plants close together; on the hill where Billington climbed a tree.

A calabash at Pilgrim Hall nearly two feet high, in the form of a jar, showed what these fruits were made for. Nature's jars and vases.

Holbrook says the *Bufo Americanus* is the most common in America and is our representative of the *Bufo communis* of Europe; speaks of its trill; deposits its spawn in pools.

Found in College Yard *Trifolium procumbens*, or yellow clover.

Concord. — Celandine in blossom, and horse-chestnut.

May 25. *Tuesday*. P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook and Flint's Pond.

[1] The *Tropidonotus sipedon*, water snake, of Holbrook.

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The *Rhodora Canadensis* is not yet out of blossom, and its leaves are not expanded. It is important for its contrast with the surrounding green, — so much high-colored blossom. The *Pyrus arbutifolia* now. The ferns are grown up large, and some are in fruit, a dark or blackish fruit part way down the stem, with a strong scent, — quite a rich-looking fruit, of small dark-greenish globules clustered together. The female red maples bearing keys are later to put forth leaves. The catkins of the willows on the Turnpike, now fallen, cover the water. The water has subsided so that the pads lie on the surface. The chinquapin shrub oak is blossoming. The pincushion galls appear on the oak. The oak apples are forming. Those galls first named, a sparkling frosted cotton, are very beautiful. The veronica is everywhere in bloom, in the grass by the roadside. It is blossom week with the apples. The shad-blossoms are gone. Apple trees on distant hillsides look like whitish rocks, or like a snow imperfectly covering the ground, or like the reindeer mosses. The sarsaparilla in bloom; and trientalis, its white star. Some call bluets innocence. The reddish buds of the *Pyrus arbutifolia* are handsomer than the flower. What a *sunny* yellow in the early cinquefoil, which now spots the grass! The red oak sprouts have grown ten inches before their leaves are expanded. Some late willows have fresh green catkins now. Clustered Solomon's-seal. *Polygonatum pubescens* ready to bloom. Is that an aralia near the brook? Medeola or cucumber-root in bud, with its two-storied whorl of leaves. The trilliums (*T. cernuum*, wake-robin) in bloom, and the geraniums show great

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leaves. Mosquitoes have come. (They say there are none in Plymouth village.) Consider the fugacious fragrance of many flowers. The dark striped flowers of the arums now, some whitish. Cress in flower. The veratrums by this brook have run up so high they make a tropical scenery on the edge of the water, like young palms. Yellow butterflies one at a time. The large yellow woods violet (*V. pubescens*) by this brook now out. The *Rana palustris*, or pickerel frog, is abundant in the meadows. I hear the first troonk of a bullfrog. The fringed polygala (*P. paucifolia*), flowering wintergreen. What bird was that whose wild note I heard at Goose Pond to-night? A loon or a bittern? First nighthawks squeak and boom. Grasshoppers appear.

May 26. *Wednesday.* Surveying the Brooks farm. The early thalictrum has been in bloom some time. Perceive the rank smell of brakes. Observe the yellow bark of the barberry.

When the cows and bullocks were lively in the pasture about my compass, Bigelow said the grubs were working in their backs. He had that morning taken out three or four from the back of a young bull he has. They have black heads, which appear and are three quarters of an inch long; are natural to the creature; lie right in the meat, and when they begin to squirm, then the cattle toss their tails and are lively. Great corporations are the cattle, and their vermin are large. This is a new version of the œstrus, — a sudden stampede among the steers when the grubs

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squirm in their backs!! He had also seen the grub in their tails. They are occupied as parts of the earth.

The air is full of the odor of apple blossoms, yet the air is fresh as from the salt water. The meadow smells sweet as you go along low places in the road at sundown. To-night I hear many crickets. They have commenced their song. They bring in the summer.

Walking home from surveying. — The fields are *just beginning* to be reddened with sorrel. I hear the pea-wai, the tender note. Is it not the small pewee? Channing says he has seen a red clover blossom and heard a stake-driver. Lousewort (*Pedicularis Canadensis*), very badly named. Pipes (*Equisetum uliginosum*) in blossom. The *Geranium maculatum*(*?*). One of the large flowering ferns, — part way up the stalk, — (*Osmunda?*); and an early *Thalictrum* (*dioicum?*). The meadows are full of saxifrage.

May 27. At Corner Spring.

A wet day. The veery sings nevertheless. The road is white with the apple blossoms fallen off, as with snowflakes. The dogwood is coming out. Ladies'-slippers out. They perfume the air. *Ranunculus recurvatus*, hooked crowfoot, by the spring. *Prunus maritima*, beach plum, by Hubbard's. Dwarf cornel. *Smilacina racemosa*, clustered Solomon's-seal. The nodding trillium has a faint, rich scent; the *Convallaria bifolia* a strong but not very pleasant scent. *Ranunculus acris*, or tall crowfoot, before the first buttercup shows much.

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Viola lanceolata, white. (I did not distinguish it before.) My early willow is either the swamp willow or the bog willow of Bigelow. The *Salix nigra*, or black willow, of Gray, in bloom. *Myosotis laxa*, water mouse-ear, by Depot Field Brook. The fruit of the sweet flag is now just fit to eat, and reminds me of childhood, — the critchicrotches. They would help sustain a famished traveller. The inmost tender leaf, also, near the base, is quite palatable, as children know. I love it as well as muskrats (?). The smooth speedwell, the minute pale-blue striated flower by the roadsides and in the short sod of fields, common now. I hear but few toads and peepers now. The sweetness which appears to be wafted from the meadow (I am on the Corner causeway) is indescribably captivating, Sabean odors, such as voyageurs tell of when approaching a coast. Can it be the grape so early? I think not. May it be the mint in the meadow, just left bare by the receding waters? It appears to come from the ditch by the roadside. Methinks the tree-toad croaks more this wet weather. The tall crowfoot out. The fringed polygala near the Corner Spring is a delicate flower, with very fresh tender green leaves and red-purple blossoms; beautiful from the contrast of its clear red-purple flowers with its clear green leaves. The cuckoo. Caught a wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*), the color of a dead leaf. He croaked as I held him, perfectly frog-like. A humblebee is on my bunch of flowers laid down.

May 28. White thorn and yellow Bethlehem-star (*Hypoxis erecta*).

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May 29. Fogs this and yesterday morning. I hear the quails nowadays while surveying. Barberry in bloom, wild pinks, and blue-eyed grass.

May 30. *Sunday.* Now is the summer come. A breezy, washing day. A day for shadows, even of moving clouds, over fields in which the grass is beginning to wave. Senecio in bloom. A bird's nest in grass, with coffee-colored eggs. Cinquefoil and houstonia cover the ground, mixed with the grass and contrasting with each other. Strong lights and shades now. Wild cherry on the low shrubs, but not yet the trees, a rummy scent. Violets everywhere spot the meadows, some more purple, some more lilac. The tall pipe-grass (*Equisetum uliginosum*). The *Drosera rotundifolia* now glistens with its dew at midday, a beautiful object closely examined. The dwarf andromeda is about out of bloom. Its new shoots from the side of the old stem are an inch or more long. The little leaves appear to be gradually falling off, after all. See again if they do not all fall off in the summer. Distinguished the *Viola palmata* in Hubbard's meadow, near the sidesaddle-flowers, which last are *just beginning* to blossom. The last are quite showy flowers when the wind turns them so as to show their under sides.

It is a day of shadows, the leaves have so grown, and of wind, — a washing day, — and the shadows of the clouds are observed flitting over the landscape. I do not yet observe a difference between the two kinds of *Pyrus arbutifolia*, if, indeed, I have compared the two, *i. e.* my early black and later red-fruited, which last

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holds on all winter. The fruit of the amelanchier is as big as *small* peas. I have not noticed any other berry so large yet. The anemones appear to be nearly gone. Yellow lilies are abundant. The bulbous arethusa, the most splendid, rich, and high-colored flower thus far, methinks, all flower and color, almost without leaves, and looking much larger than it is, and more conspicuous on account of its intense color. A flower of mark. It appeared two or three times as large as reality when it flashed upon me from the meadow. Bigelow calls it a "crystalline purple." (Saw some the 6th of June, but no longer fresh.) [1] What kind of blackberry did I find in blossom in Hubbard's Swamp? Passed a cow that had just dropped her calf in the meadow. The sumach (*glabra*) is well under weigh now. The yellow water ranunculus by the Corner causeway. There are young robins in nests. To what sparrow belong the coffee-colored eggs in Hubbard's field by the brook? White cohush in bloom; also *Smilacina stellata*. The branches or branchlets of the maidenhair fern are so disposed as to form two thirds of a cup around the stem. The flowers of the sassafras have not such a fragrance as I perceived last year. High blueberry flowers are quite conspicuous. The bass leaf is now large and handsome. The geranium is a delicate flower and belongs especially to shady places under trees and shrubs, — better if about springs, — in by-nooks, so modest. The early gnaphaliums are gone to seed, having run

[1] [In this case, as not infrequently happened, Thoreau was evidently writing up his Journal — or copying his pencilled field-notes into it — some days after the event.]

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up seven or ten inches. The field plantain, which I saw in Plymouth a week ago, abundant there. The narrow-leaved cotton-grass. The *Equisetum sylvaticum*, or wood horse-tail in the meadows. The lupine, which I saw almost in blossom a week ago at Plymouth, I hear is in blossom here. The river is my own highway, the only wild and unfenced part of the world hereabouts. How much of the world is widow's thirds, with a hired man to take negligent care of it! The apple trees are about out of blossom. It is but a week they last.

Israel Rice thinks the first half of June is not commonly so warm as May, and that the reason is that vegetation is so advanced that the earth is shaded and protected from the sun by the grass also, so that it is delayed in being warmed by the summer sun.

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II

JUNE, 1852

(ÆT. 34)

June 1. Evening. — To the Lee place, the moon about full.

The sounds I hear by the bridge: the midsummer frog (I think it is not the toad), the nighthawk, crickets, the peetweet (it is early), the hum of dor-bugs, and the whip-poor-will. The boys are coming home from fishing, for the river is down at last. The moving clouds are the drama of the moonlight nights, and never-failing entertainment of nightly travellers. You can never foretell the fate of the moon, — whether she will prevail over or be obscured by the clouds half an hour hence. The traveller's sympathy with the moon makes the drama of the shifting clouds interesting. The fate of the moon will disappoint all expectations. Her own light creates the shadows in the coming (advancing) clouds, and exaggerates her destiny.[1] I do not perceive much warmth in the rocks.

June 2. *Wednesday.* Measured C. Davis's elm at the top of his fence, just built, five feet from the ground. It is fifteen and two twelfths feet in circumference and much larger many feet higher. Buttercups now spot the churchyard. The elms now hold a good deal of

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 329, 330; Riv. 405.]

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shade and look rich and heavy with foliage. You see darkness in them. Golden alexanders — looks like a parsnip — near or beyond the East Quarter schoolhouse. The barberry blossoms are now abundant. They fill the air with a disagreeable, buttery fragrance. Low blackberry in bloom. Hazy days now. Milkweed, elecampane, butter-and-eggs, etc., etc., are getting up. The dried brown petals of apple blossoms spot the sod in pastures. Measured a chestnut stump on Asa White's land, twenty-three and nine twelfths feet in circumference, eight and one half feet one way, seven feet the other, at one foot from ground. Nest of Wilson's thrush with bluish-green eggs. Female sassafras in bloom. I think I may say the umbelled thesium has begun to bloom. The pincushion galls appear on the oaks.

I found a plant whose name I know not; somewhat fern-like; leaves in a whorl of five, two double, one single; the whole nine inches high; no flower.

June 3. The nepeta by Deacon Brown's, a pretty blue flower. It has been a sultry day, and a slight thunder-shower, and now I see fireflies in the meadows at evening.

June 4. *Friday.* The birds sing at dawn. What sounds to be awakened by! If only our sleep, our dreams, are such as to harmonize with the song, the warbling of the birds, ushering in the day! They appear comparatively silent an hour or two later.

The dandelions are now almost all gone to seed, and

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children may now see if "your mother wants you." The golden alexanders is called *Zizia aurea*. The cistus is out. Lupines in prime. The Canada snapdragon, that little blue flower that lasts so long, grows with the lupines under Fair Haven. The early chickweed[1] with the star-shaped flower is common in fields now.

June 5. The medeola has blossomed in a tumbler. I seem to perceive a pleasant fugacious fragrance from its rather delicate but inconspicuous green flower. Its whorls of leaves of two stages are the most remarkable. I do not perceive the smell of the cucumber in its root.

To Harrington's, P. M. The silver cinquefoil (*Potentilla argentea*) now, a delicate spring-yellow, sunny-yellow (before the dog-days) flower; none of the fire of autumnal yellows in it. Its silvery leaf is as good as a flower. Whiteweed.

The constant inquiry which nature puts is: "Are you virtuous? Then you can behold me." Beauty, fragrance, music, sweetness, and joy of all kinds are for the virtuous. That I thought when I heard the telegraph harp to-day.

Raspberry some days since. The leaves of young oaks are full-grown. The *Viburnum lentago*, if that edged petiole marks it enough. The *Veratrum viride*, with its green and yellowish flower. Umbelled thesium, which has shown its buds so long. The *Viola lanceolata* now, instead of the *V. blanda*. In some places the

[1] Cerastium?

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leaves of the last are grown quite large. The sidesaddle-flowers. The *Thalictrum anemonoides* still. The dwarf cornel by Harrington's road looks like large snowflakes on the hillside, it is so thick. It is a neat, geometrical flower, of a pure white, sometimes greenish, or green. The white [1] spruce cones are an inch and a half long. The larch cones appear not so red yet as they will be. Can it be that earliest potentilla that now stands up so high in open pine woods and wood-paths, — a foot high? The *simplex* variety? There is now froth on the white and pitch pines, at the base of the new shoots, which are from three to six inches long. Some meadows are quite white with the cotton-grass. White clover now. Some rye-fields are almost fully grown, where it appears to have sown itself. It is commonly two feet high. Those great roots belong to the yellow lily. Some poet must sing in praise of the bulbous arethusa.

The lupine is now in its glory. It is the more important because it occurs in such extensive patches, even an acre or more together, and of such a pleasing variety of colors, — purple, pink, or lilac, and white, — especially with the sun on it, when the transparency of the flower makes its color changeable. It paints a whole hillside with its blue, making such a field (if not meadow) as Proserpine might have wandered in. Its leaf was made to be covered with dewdrops. I am quite excited by this prospect of blue flowers in clumps with narrow intervals. Such a profusion of the heavenly, the elysian, color, as if these were the Elysian

[1] ["Black" is substituted in pencil.]

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Fields. They say the seeds look like babies' faces, and hence the flower is so named. No other flowers exhibit so much blue. That is the value of the lupine. The earth is blued with them. Yet a third of a mile distant I do not detect their color on the hillside. Perchance because it is the color of the air. It is not *distinct* enough. You passed along here, perchance, a fortnight ago, and the hillside was comparatively barren, but now you come and these glorious redeemers appear to have flashed out here all at once. Who planted the seeds of lupines in the barren soil? Who watereth the lupines in the fields?

Distinguished the *Geum rivale*, water avens, in James P. Brown's meadow, a drooping, half-closed, purplish-brown flower, with a strawberry-looking fruit. The *Erigeron bellidifolius*, robin's-plantain (may it be the *E. Philadelphicus?*), that rather rose-purple flower which looks like an early aster. A rather delicate and interesting flower, flesh-colored.

Pray let us live without being drawn by dogs, Esquimaux-fashion, a scrambling pack tearing over hill and vale and biting each other's ears. What a despicable mode of progressing, to be drawn by a pack of dogs! Why not by a flock of mice? [1]

De Kay, of the New York Report, says the bream "is of no value as an article of food, but is often caught for amusement!" I think it is the sweetest fish in our river.

Richardson says that white bears and arctic foxes frequent the most northern land discovered.

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 473; *Misc.*, Riv. 276.]

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June 6. *Sunday*. First devil's-needles in the air, and some smaller, bright-green ones on flowers. The earliest blueberries are now forming as greenberries. The wind already injures the just-expanded leaves, tearing them and making them turn black. I see the effects of recent frosts on the young oaks in hollows in the woods. The leaves are turned dry, black, and crisp. The side-flowering sandwort, an inconspicuous white flower like a chickweed.

June 7. Surveying for Sam. Pierce. Found piece of an Indian soapstone pot.

June 9. The buck-bean in Hubbard's meadow just going out of blossom. The yellow water ranunculus is an important flower in the river now, rising above the white lily pads, whose flower does not yet appear. I perceive that their petals, washed ashore, line the sand conspicuously. The green-briar in flower.

For a week past we have had *washing* days. The grass waving, and trees having leaved out, their boughs wave and feel the effect of the breeze. Thus new life and motion is imparted to the trees. The season of waving boughs; and the lighter under sides of the new leaves are exposed. This is the first half of June. Already the grass is not so fresh and liquid-velvety a green, having much of it blossom[ed] and some even gone to seed, and it is mixed with reddish ferns and other plants, but the general leafiness, shadiness, and waving of grass and boughs in the breeze characterize the season. The wind is not quite agreeable, because it

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prevents your hearing the birds sing. Meanwhile the crickets are strengthening their quire. The weather is very clear, and the sky bright. The river shines like silver. Methinks this is a traveller's month. The locust in bloom. The waving, undulating rye. The deciduous trees have filled up the intervals between the evergreens, and the woods are bosky now.

Is that the *Thalictrum Cornuti* that shows green stamens, at the Corner Spring? Gathered strawberries on Fair Haven. Rather acid yet.

The priests of the Germans and Britons were druids. They had their sacred oaken groves. Such were their steeple houses. Nature was to some extent a fane to them. There was fine religion in that form of worship, and Stonehenge remains as evidence of some vigor in the worshippers, as the Pyramids, perchance, of the vigor of the Egyptians, derived from the slime of the Nile. Evelyn says of the oak, which he calls "these robust sons of the earth," "It is reported that the very shade of this tree is so wholesome, that the sleeping, or lying under it, becomes a present remedy to paralytics, and recovers those whom the mistaken malign influence of the Walnut-tree has smitten."[1] Which we may take for a metaphorical expression of the invigorating influence of rude, wild, robust nature, compared with the effeminating luxury of civilized life. Evelyn has collected the fine exaggerations of antiquity respecting the virtues and habits of trees and added some himself. He says, "I am told that those small young acorns which we find in the stock-doves' craws are a delicious

[1] [John Evelyn, *Silva: or a Discourse of Forest Trees.*]

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fare, as well as those incomparable salads, young herbs taken out of the maws of partridges at a certain season of the year, which gives them a preparation far exceeding all the art of cookery." If the oft-repeated glorification of the forest from age to age smacks of religion, is even druidical, Evelyn is as good as several old druids, and his "Silva" is a new kind of prayer-book, a glorifying of the trees and enjoying them forever, which was the chief end of his life.

A child loves to strike on a tin pan or other ringing vessel with a stick, because, its ears being fresh, sound, attentive, and percipient, it detects the finest music in the sound, at which all nature assists. Is not the very cope of the heavens the sounding-board of the infant drummer? So clear and unprejudiced ears hear the sweetest and most soul-stirring melody in tinkling cow-bells and the like (dogs baying the moon), not to be referred to association, but intrinsic in the sound itself; those cheap and simple sounds which men despise because their ears are dull and debauched. Ah, that I were so much a child that I could unfailingly draw music from a quart pot! Its little ears tingle with the melody. To it there is music in sound alone.

Evelyn speaks of "mel-dews" attracting bees. Can mildews be corrupted from this? Says that the alder, laid under water, "will harden like a very stone," and speaks of their being used "for the draining of grounds by placing them . . . in the trenches," which I have just seen done here under Clamshell Hill.

Evelyn's love of his subject teaches him to use many expressive words, some imported from the Latin, which

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I wonder how we can do without. He says of the "oziers or aquatic salix," "It likewise yields more limber and flexible twigs for baskets, flaskets, hampers, cages, lattices, cradles, . . . the bodies of coaches and waggons, . . . for chairs, hurdles, stays, bands," etc.; "likewise for fish-weirs, and to support the banks of impetuous rivers: In fine, for all wicker and *twiggy* works;

'Viminibus Salices' — VIRG."

Many of his words show a poetic genius.

The above-mentioned is the reason that children are fond of and make what grown people call a *noise*, because of the music which their young ears detect in it.

Peaches are the principal crop in Lincoln, and cherries a very important one; yet Evelyn says, "We may read that the peach was at first accounted so tender and delicate a tree, as that it was believed to thrive only in Persia; and even in the days of Galen, it grew no nearer than Egypt, of all the Roman Provinces, but was not seen in the city till about thirty years before Pliny's time;" but now it is the principal crop cultivated in Lincoln in New England, and it is also cultivated extensively in the West and on lands not half a dozen years vacated by the Indians. Also, "It was 680 years after the foundation of Rome, ere Italy had tasted a cherry of their own, which being then brought thither out of Pontus, did after 120 years, travel ad ultimos Britannos," and I may add *Lincolnos*. As Evelyn says, "Methinks this should be a wonderful incitement."

Evelyn well says "a *sobbing* rain."

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Trees live so long that Evelyn in Milton's day tells anecdotes of old trees, and recent writers tell the same or similar anecdotes of the same trees still standing. They have stood to have the stories repeated and enlarged concerning them. He tells of "*Neustadt an der grossen Linden*, or Neustadt by the great Lime-tree." After quoting at length some of the inscriptions on the stone columns placed under this famous tree by noble persons, proving its age, he adds, "Together with several more too tedious to recite; and even these might have [been] spared the reader, but that I found the instance so particular and solemn."

What means that custom of parents planting a tree or a forest at the birth of an heir, to be an inheritance or a dower, but a sort of regrafting the man on the vegetable? If a forest were planted at the birth of every man, nations would not be likely to become effete. It has ever been regarded as a crime, even among warriors, to cut down a nation's woods.

He, Evelyn, speaks of pines "pearling out into gums." Things raised in a garden he calls "*hortular furniture*." He talks of modifying the air as well as the soil, about plants, "and make the remedy as well regional as topical." This suggests the propriety of Shakespeare's expression the "*region* cloud," region meaning then oftener upper regions relatively to the earth.

He speaks of a "dewie *sperge* or brush," to be used instead of a watering-pot, which "gluts" the earth. He calls the kitchen-garden the "olitory garden." In a dedication of his "Kalendarium Hortense" to Cowley, he inserts two or three good sentences or quotations,

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viz.: "As the philosopher in Seneca desired only bread and herbs to dispute felicity with Jupiter," so of Cowley's simple retired life. "Who would not, like you, *cacher sa vie?*" "Delivered from the gilded impertinences of life."

June 11. *Friday.* 3 P. M. — Down railroad.

I hear the bobolink, though he does not sing so much as he did, and the lark and my seringo, as I go down the railroad causeway. The cricket sings. The red clover does not yet cover the fields. The whiteweed is more obvious. It commonly happens that a flower is considered more beautiful that is not followed by fruit. It must culminate in the flower. The cistus is a delicate flower in sandy woods now, with a slight, innocent spring fragrance, — one of those, like the pink, which you cannot bring home in good condition. June-grass is ripe. The red-eye sings now in the woods, perhaps more than any other bird. (In the shanty field.) The mountains are misty and blue. It has been quite windy for ten days, and cold a part of the time. The maple-leaved viburnum at Laurel Glen; the round-leaved cornel, and the mountain laurel, all budded.[1] The yellow diervilla (*D. trifida*) ready to blossom there. The low blueberry leaves and flowers (*Vaccinium vacillans* of Gray) have a sweet scent. Froth on the pigeon-plain pines. A robin sings (3.30 P. M.) and wood thrush amid the pines; flies hum, and mosquitoes; and the earth feels under the feet as if it were going to be dry. The air in this pitch pine wood is filled with the hum of

[1] [A pencilled interrogation-point in parenthesis follows here.]

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gnats, flies, and mosquitoes. High blackberries a day or two since. The bullfrogs in Walden (some of them at least) are a light-colored greenish brown. The huckleberry-bird is heard. I perceived that untraceable odor by the shore of Walden near railroad, where there are grape-vines, and yet the vines do not smell, and I have perceived it for two or three weeks. The vines appear but just in flower. Bittersweet, woody nightshade (*Solanum Dulcamara*). It has a singular strong odor. Everywhere the leaves of goldenrods from the old roots; also, in some places, epilobium. The veery reminds me of the wood thrush in its note, as well as form and color. You must attend to the birds in the spring.

As I climbed the Cliffs, when I jarred the foliage, I perceived an exquisite perfume which I could not trace to its source. Ah, those fugacious universal fragrances of the meadows and woods! Odors rightly mingled!

The snapdragon, a slight blue flower, in dry places. Interesting. The oak balls lie about under the black oaks. The shrub oaks on the plain are so covered with foliage that, when I looked down on it from the Cliff, I am impressed as if I looked down on a forest of oaks. The oven-bird and the thrasher sing. The last has a sort of chuckle. The crickets began to sing in warm dry places.

Another little veronica (?) on the Cliffs, just going out of bloom, *V. arvensis* (?), with crenately cut leaves and hairy. The first was the smooth. The pines are budded. I do not see the female flower yet. There is froth at the base of the new shoots even at the top of

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the highest pines. Yarrow, with a strong tansy scent. Lupines, their pods and seeds. First the profusion of color, spikes of flowers rising above and prevailing over the leaves; then the variety in different clumps, rose(?)-purple, blue, and white; then the handsome palmate leaf, made to hold dew. Gray says from *lupus* (wolf) because they "were thought to devour the fertility of the soil." This is scurrilous. Under Fair Haven. First grew the *Viola pedata* here, then lupines, mixed with the delicate snapdragon. This soil must abound with the blue principle. Is that the tephrosia, so forward? The fruit of the *Cerasus pumila* is puffed up like How's plums. The *Aralia nudicaulis* already shows small green berries. The lupine has no pleasant fragrance. The cistus a slight enlargement of the cinquefoil, the June (?) cinquefoil, what the summer can do.

It was probably the *Thalictrum Cornuti*, meadow-rue, which I saw at the Corner Spring, though it has no white stamens. The red (Indian (?) red) huckleberry and the white and red blueberry blossoms (the *Gaylussacia resinosa*, black huckleberry, and *Vaccinium vacillans*) are very handsome and interesting now and would attract more attention if the prospect of their fruit did not make us overlook them. Moon-seed is a good name for a plant. I should know it.

The Jones elm is fifteen and three twelfths feet circumference at five or six feet from ground, or at the smallest place; much more at twelve or fourteen feet from ground, — larger, then, than C. Davis's elm at the smallest place.

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The pyrolas now ready to blossom. Shin-leaf is a good name for one. *Scleranthus annuus*, common knawel, in the paths; inconspicuous and moss-like. *Utricularia vulgaris*, common bladderwort, a dirty-conditioned flower, like a sluttish woman with a gaudy yellow bonnet. Is the grape out? Solomon's-seal, two-leaved, with a third. *Sanicula Marylandica*, black snake-root, without color at first, glows [?] like a buttercup, leaf and stem. Those spotted maple leaves, — what mean their bright colors? Yellow with a greenish centre and a crimson border on the green leaves, as if the Great Chemist had dropped some strong acid by chance from a phial designed for autumnal use! Very handsome. Decay and disease are often beautiful, like the pearly tear of the shellfish and the hectic glow of consumption.

The ivy or *Rhus Toxicodendron* (*radicans* when climbing trees), budded to blossom, looks like an aralia.

June 12. *Saturday*. P. M. — To Lupine Hill *via* Depot Field Brook.

For some time I have noticed the grass whitish and killed at top by worms (?). The meadows are yellow with golden senecio. Marsh speedwell (*Veronica scutellata*), lilac-tinted, rather pretty. The mouse-ear forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa*) has now extended its racemes (?) very much, and hangs over the edge of the brook. It is one of the most interesting minute flowers. It is the more beautiful for being small and unpretending, for even flowers must be modest. The blue flag (*Iris versi-*

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color). Its buds are a dark indigo-blue tip beyond the green calyx. It is rich but hardly delicate and simple enough; a very handsome sword-shaped leaf. The blue-eyed grass is one of the most beautiful of flowers. It might have been famous from Proserpine down. It will bear to be praised by poets. The blue flag, notwithstanding its rich furniture, its fringed recurved parasols over its anthers, and its variously streaked and colored petals, is loose and coarse in its habit. How completely all character is expressed by flowers! This is a little too showy and gaudy, like some women's bonnets. Yet it belongs to the meadow and ornaments it much. The critchicrotches are going to seed. I love the sweet-flag as well as the muskrat (?). Its tender inmost leaf is very palatable below. *Œnothera pumila*, dwarf tree-primrose. Ever it will be some obscure small and modest flower that will most please us. Some of the ferns have branches wholly covered with fruit.

How difficult, if not impossible, to do the things we have done! as fishing and camping out. They seem to me a little fabulous now.

Boys are bathing at Hubbard's Bend, playing with a boat (I at the willows). The color of their bodies in the sun at a distance is pleasing, the not often seen flesh-color. I hear the sound of their sport borne over the water. As yet we have not man in nature. What a singular fact for an angel visitant to this earth to carry back in his note-book, that men were forbidden to expose their bodies under the severest penalties! A pale pink, which the sun would soon tan. White men!

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There are no white men to contrast with the red and the black; they are of such colors as the weaver gives them. I wonder that the dog knows his master when he goes in to bathe and does not stay by his clothes.

Small white-bellied (?) swallows in a row (a dozen) on the telegraph-wire over the water by the bridge. This perch is little enough departure from unobstructed air to suit them. Pluming themselves. If you could furnish a perch aerial enough, even birds of paradise would alight. Swallows have forked tails, and wings and tails are about the same length. They do not alight on trees, methinks, unless on dead and bare boughs, but stretch a wire over water and they perch on it. This is among the phenomena that cluster about the telegraph.

Hedge-mustard. (Turned into the lane beyond Dennis's.) Some fields are almost wholly covered with sheep's-sorrel, now turned red, — its valves (?). It helps thus agreeably to paint the earth, contrasting even at a distance with the greener fields, blue sky, and dark or downy clouds. It is red, marbled, watered, mottled, or waved with greenish, like waving grain, — three or four acres of it. To the farmer or grazier it is a troublesome weed, but to the landscape-viewer an agreeable red tinge laid on by the painter. I feel well into summer when I see this redness. It appears to be avoided by the cows.

The petals of the sidesaddle-flower, fully expanded, hang down. How complex it is, what with flowers and leaves! It is a wholesome and interesting plant to me, the leaf especially. Rye that has sown itself and come

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up scatteringly in bunches is now nearly ripe. They are beginning to cut rank grass on the village street. I should say the summer began with the leafiness, — umbrageous summer! The glory of Dennis's lupines is departed, and the white now shows in abundance beneath them. So I cannot walk longer in those fields of Enna in which Proserpine amused herself gathering flowers.

The steam whistle at a distance sounds even like the hum of a bee in a flower. So man's works fall into nature.

The flies hum at mid-afternoon, as if peevish and weary of the length of the days. The river is shrunk to summer width; on the sides smooth whitish water, — or rather it is the light from the pads; — in the middle, dark blue or slate, rippled.

The color of the earth at a distance where a wood has been cut off is a reddish brown. Nature has put no large object on the face of New England so glaringly white as a white house.

The *Ranunculus filiformis* on the muddy shore of the river. The locusts' blossoms in the graveyard fill the street with their sweet fragrance.

It is day, and we have more of that same light that the moon sent us, but not reflected now, but shining directly. The sun is a fuller moon. Who knows how much lighter day there may be?

June 13. *Sunday.* 3 P. M. — To Conantum.

A warm day. It has been cold, and we have had fires the past week sometimes. Clover begins to show

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red in the fields, and the wild cherry is not out of blossom. The river has a summer midday look, smooth to a cobweb, with green shores, and shade from the trees on its banks. The *Viburnum nudum*. The oblong-leaved sundew, but not its flower. Do the bulbous arethusas last long?

What a sweetness fills the air now in low grounds or meadows, reminding me of times when I went strawberrying years ago! It is as if all meadows were filled with some sweet mint. The *Dracæna borealis* (Bigelow) (*Clintonia borealis* (Gray)) amid the Solomon's-seals in Hubbard's Grove Swamp, a very neat and handsome liliaceous flower with three large, regular, spotless, green convallaria leaves, making a triangle from the root, and sometimes a fourth from the scape, linear, with four drooping, greenish-yellow, bell-shaped (?) flowers. Not in sun. In low shady woods. It is a handsome and perfect flower, though not high-colored. I prefer it to some more famous. But Gray should not name it from the Governor of New York.[1] What is he to the lovers of flowers in Massachusetts? If named after a man, it must be a man of flowers. Rhode Island botanists may as well name the flowers after their governors as New York. Name your canals and railroads after Clinton, if you please, but his name is not associated with flowers. Mosquitoes now trouble the walker in low shady woods. No doubt woodchucks in their burrows hear the steps of walkers through the earth and come not forth. Yellow wood sorrel (*Oxalis stricta*), which, according to Gray, closes its leaves and droops at nightfall. The

[1] [It was named by Rafinesque.]

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woolly aphides on alders whiten one's clothes now. What is that palmate(?)-leaved water-plant by the Corner causeway? The buck-bean grows in Conant's meadow. Lambkill is out. I remember with what delight I used to discover this flower in dewy mornings. All things in this world must be seen with the morning dew on them, must be seen with youthful, early-opened, hopeful eyes. Saw four cunning little woodchucks nibbling the short grass, about one third grown, that live under Conant's old house. Mistook one for a piece of rusty iron. The *Viburnum Lentago* is about out of bloom; shows young berries. The *Smilax herbacea*, carrion-flower, a rank green vine with long-peduncled umbels, with small greenish or yellowish flowers just opening, and tendrils, at the Miles swamp. It smells exactly like a dead rat in the wall, and apparently attracts flies (I find small gnats on it) like carrion. A very remarkable odor; a single minute flower in an umbel open will scent a whole room. Nature imitates all things in flowers. They are at once the most beautiful and the ugliest objects, the most fragrant and the most offensive to the nostrils, etc., etc. The compound-racemed convallaria, being fully out, is white. I put it down too early, perhaps by a week. The great leaves of the bass attract you now, six inches in diameter. The delicate maidenhair fern forms a cup or dish, very delicate and graceful. Beautiful, too, its glossy black stem and its wave-edged fruited leafets. I hear the feeble plaintive note of young bluebirds, just trying their wings or getting used to them. Young robins peep.

I think I know four kinds of cornel beside the dog-

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wood and bunchberry: one now in bloom, with *rather* small leaves with a smooth, silky feeling beneath, a greenish-gray spotted stem, in older stocks all gray (*Cornus alternifolia?* or *sericea?*); the broad-leaved cornel in Laurel Glen, yet green in the bud (*C. circinata?*); the small-leaved cornel with a small cyme or corymb, as late to be [*sic*] as the last, in Potter's hedge and on high hills (*C. paniculata*); and the red osier by the river (*C. stolonifera*), which I have not seen this year.

Mosquitoes are first troublesome in the house with sultry nights.

Orobanche uniflora, single-flowered broom-rape (Bigelow), [or] *Aphyllon uniflorum*, one-flowered cancer-root (Gray). C. found it June 12 at Clematis Brook. Also the common fumitory (?), methinks; it is a fine-leaved small plant.

Captain Jonathan Carver commences his Travels with these words: "In June, 1766, I set out from Boston, and proceeded by way of Albany and Niagara, to Michillimackinac; a Fort situated between the Lakes Huron and Michigan, and distant from Boston 1300 miles. This being the uttermost of our factories towards the northwest, I considered it as the most convenient place from whence I could begin my intended progress, and enter at once into the Regions I designed to explore." [1] So he gives us no information respecting the intermediate country, nor much, I fear, about the country beyond.

Holbrook says the *Emys picta* is the first to be seen in the spring.

[1] [*Travels through the Interior Parts of North America.*]

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June 14. There are various new reflections now of the light, *viz.* from the under sides of leaves (fresh and white) turned up by the wind, and also from the bent blades (horizontal tops) of rank grass in the meadows, — a sort of bluish sheeny light, this last. Saw a wild rose from the cars in Weston. The early red roses are out in gardens at home.

June 15. *Tuesday. Silene Antirrhina*, sleepy catch-fly, or snapdragon catch-fly, the ordinarily curled-up petals scarcely noticeable at the end of the large oval calyx. Gray says opening only by night or cloudy weather. Bigelow says probably nocturnal, for he never found it expanded by day. (I found it June 16th at 6 A. M. expanded, two of its flowers, — and they remained so for some hours, in my chamber.) By railroad near Badger's.

Yesterday we smelt the sea strongly; the sea breeze alone made the day tolerable. This morning, a shower! The robin only sings the louder for it. He is inclined to sing in foul weather.

To Clematis Brook, 1.30 P. M.

Very warm. Now for a thin coat. This melting weather makes a stage in the year. The crickets creak louder and more steadily; the bullfrogs croak in earnest. The drouth begins. The dry z-ing of the locust is heard. The potatoes are of that height to stand up at night. Bathing cannot be omitted. The conversation of all boys in the streets is whether they will or not or who will go in a-swimming, and how they will not tell their parents. You lie with open windows and hear the sounds in the streets.

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The seringo sings now *at noon* on a post; has a light streak over eye.

The autumnal dandelion (*Leontodon*, or *Apargia*). *Erigeron integrifolius* of Bigelow (*strigosus, i. e.* narrow-leaved daisy fleabane, of Gray) very common, like a white aster.

I will note such birds as I observe in this walk, beginning on the railroad causeway in middle of this hot day. The chuckling warble of martins heard over the meadow, from a village box. The lark. The fields are blued with blue-eyed grass, — a slaty blue. The epilobium shows some color in its spikes.

How rapidly new flowers unfold! as if Nature would get through her work too soon. One has as much as he can do to observe how flowers successively unfold. It is a flowery revolution, to which but few attend. Hardly too much attention can be bestowed on flowers. We follow, we march after, the highest color; that is our flag, our standard, our "color." Flowers were made to be seen, not overlooked. Their bright colors imply eyes, spectators. There have been many flower men who have rambled the world over to see them. The flowers robbed from an Egyptian traveller were at length carefully boxed up and forwarded to Linnæus, the man of flowers. The common, early cultivated red roses are certainly very handsome, so rich a color and so full of blossoms; you see why even blunderers have introduced them into their gardens.

Ascending to pigeon-place plain, the reflection of the heat from the dead pine-needles and the boughs strewn about, combined with the dry, suffocating scent, is

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oppressive and reminds me of the first settlers of Concord. The oven-bird, chewink, pine warbler (?), thrasher, swallows on the wire, cuckoo, phœbe, red-eye, robin, veery. The maple-leaved viburnum is opening with a purplish tinge. Wood thrush.

Is not that the *Prunus obovata*, which I find in fruit, a mere shrub, in Laurel Glen, with oval fruit and long pedicels in a raceme? And have I not mistaken the *P. Virginiana*, or northern red cherry, for this? *Vide Virginiana* and also *vide* the *P. depressa*. Golden and coppery reflections from a yellow dor-bug's coat of mail in the water. Is it a yellowbird or myrtle-bird? Huckleberry-bird.

Walden is two inches above my last mark. It must be four or five feet, at least, higher than when I sounded it. Men are inclined to be amphibious, to sympathize with fishes, now. I desire to get wet and saturated with water. The North River, Assabet, by the old stone bridge, affords the best bathing-place I think of, — a pure sandy, uneven bottom, — with a swift current, a grassy bank, and overhanging maples, with transparent water, deep enough, where you can see every fish in it. Though you stand still, you feel the rippling current about you.

First locust. The *pea-wai*.

There is considerable pollen on the pond; more than last year, notwithstanding that all the white pines near the pond are gone and there are very few pitch. It must all come from the pitch pine, whose sterile blossoms are now dry and empty, for it is earlier than the white pine. Probably I have never observed it in the

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river because it is carried away by the current. The umbelled pyrola is just ready to bloom.

Young robins, dark-speckled, and the pigeon woodpecker flies up from the ground and darts away. I forget that there are lichens at this season.

The farmhouses under their shady trees (Baker's) look as if the inhabitants were taking their siesta at this hour. I pass it [*sic*] in the rear, through the open pitch pine wood. Why does work go forward now? No scouring of tubs or cans now. The cat and all are gone to sleep, preparing for an early tea, excepting the indefatigable, never-resting hoers in the corn-field, who have carried a jug of molasses and water to the field and will wring their shirts to-night. I shall ere long hear the horn blow for their early tea. The wife or the hired Irishwoman steps to the door and blows the long tin horn, a cheering sound to the laborers in the field.

The motive of the laborer should be not to get his living, to get a good job, but to perform well a certain work. A town must pay its engineers so well that they shall not feel that they are working for low ends, as for a livelihood merely, but for scientific ends. Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love, and pay him well.[1]

On Mt. Misery, panting with heat, looking down the river. The haze an hour ago reached to Wachusett; now it obscures it. Methinks there is a male and female shore to the river, one abrupt, the other flat and meadowy. Have not all streams this contrast more or less, on the one hand eating into the bank, on the other depos-

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 459; *Misc.*, Riv. 258, 259.]

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iting their sediment? The year is in its manhood now. The very river looks warm, and there is none of that light celestial blue seen in far reaches in the spring. I see fields a mile distant reddened with sorrel. The very sight of distant water is refreshing, though a bluish steam appears to rest on it. Catbird. The waxwork is just in blossom and groves [of] hickories on the south of Mt. Misery.

How refreshing the sound of the smallest waterfall in hot [weather]! I sit by that on Clematis Brook and listen to its music. The very sight of this half-stagnant pond-hole, drying up and leaving bare mud, with the pollywogs and turtles making off in it, is agreeable and encouraging to behold, as if it contained the seeds of life, the liquor rather, boiled down. The foulest water will bubble purely. They speak to our blood, even these stagnant, slimy pools. It, too, no doubt, has its falls nobler than Montmorenci, grander than Niagara, in the course of its circulations. Here is the primitive force of Egypt and the Nile, where the lotus grows.

Some geraniums are quite rose-colored, others pale purplish-blue, others whitish. The blossom of the *Lentago* is rather sweet smelling. *Orobanche uniflora*, single-flowered broom-rape (Bigelow), [or] *Aphyllon uniflorum*, one-flowered cancer-root (Gray), grows by this brook-side, — a naked, low, bluish-white flower, even reminding you of the tobacco-pipe. Cattle walk along in a brook or ditch now for coolness, lashing their tails, and browse the edges; or they stand concealed for shade amid thick bushes. How perfectly acquainted they are with man, and never run from him! Thorn

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bushes appear to be just out of blossom. I have not observed them well. Woodchucks and squirrels are seen and heard in a walk. How much of a tortoise is shell! But little is gone with its spirit. It is well cleaned out, I trust. It is emptied of the reptile. It is not its exuviæ.

I hear the scream of a great hawk, sailing with a ragged wing against the high wood-side, apparently to scare his prey and so detect it, — shrill, harsh, fitted to excite terror in sparrows and to issue from his split and curved bill. I see his open bill the while against the sky. Spit with force from his mouth with an undulatory quaver imparted to it from his wings or motion as he flies. A hawk's ragged wing will grow whole again, but so will not a poet's.

By half past five, robins more than before, crows, of course, and jays. Dogsbane is just ready to open. Swallows. It is pleasant walking through the June-grass (in Pleasant Meadow), so thin and offering but little obstruction. The nighthawk squeaks and booms. The *Veratrum viride* top is now a handsome green cluster, two feet by ten inches.

Here also, at Well Meadow Head, I see the fringed purple orchis, unexpectedly beautiful, though a pale lilac purple, — a large spike of purple flowers. I find two, — the *grandiflora* of Bigelow and *fimbriata* of Gray. Bigelow thinks it the most beautiful of all the orchises. I am not prepared to say it is the most beautiful wild flower I have found this year. Why does it grow there only, far in a swamp, remote from public view? It is somewhat fragrant, reminding me of the lady's-slipper.

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Is it not significant that some rare and delicate and beautiful flowers should be found only in unfrequented wild swamps? There is the mould in which the orchis grows. Yet I am not sure but this is a fault in the flower. It is not quite perfect in all its parts. A beautiful flower must be simple, not spiked. It must have a fair stem and leaves. This stem is rather naked, and the leaves are for shade and moisture. It is fairest seen rising from amid brakes and hellebore, its lower part or rather naked stem concealed. Where the most beautiful wild-flowers grow, there man's spirit is fed, and poets grow. It cannot be high-colored, growing in the shade. Nature has taken no pains to exhibit [it], and few that bloom are ever seen by mortal eyes. The most striking and handsome large wild-flower of the year thus far that I have seen.

Disturbed a company of tree-toads amid the bushes. They seemed to bewilder the passer by their croaking; when he went toward one, he was silent, and another sounded on the other side. The hickory leaves are fragrant as I brush past them. Quite a feast of strawberries on Fair Haven, — the upland strawberry. The largest and sweetest on sand. The *first fruit*. The night-warbler. There are few really cold springs. I go out of my way to go by the Boiling Spring. How few men can be believed when they say the spring is cold! There is one cold as the coldest well water. What a treasure is such a spring! Who *divined* it? The cistuses are all closed. Is it because of the heat, and will they be open in the morning? C. found common hound's-tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*) by railroad.

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8 P. M. — On river.

No moon. A deafening sound from the toads, and intermittingly from bullfrogs. What I have thought to be frogs prove to be toads, sitting by thousands along the shore and trilling short and loud, — not so long a quaver as in the spring, — and I have not heard them in those pools, now, indeed, mostly dried up, where I heard them in the spring. (I do not know what to think of my midsummer frog now.) The bullfrogs are very loud, of various degrees of baseness and sonorousness, answering each other across the river with two or three grunting croaks. They are not nearly so numerous as the toads.

It is candle-light. The fishes leap. The meadows sparkle with the coppery light of fireflies. The evening star, multiplied by undulating water, is like bright sparks of fire continually ascending. The reflections of the trees are grandly indistinct. There is a low mist slightly enlarging the river, through which the arches of the stone bridge are just visible, as a vision. The mist is singularly bounded, collected here, while there is none there; close up to the bridge on one side and none on the other, depending apparently on currents of air. A dew in the air it is, which in time will wet you through. See stars reflected in the bottom of our boat, it being a quarter full of water. There is a low crescent of northern light and shooting stars from time to time. (We go only from Channing's to the ash above the railroad.) I paddle with a bough, the Nile boatman's oar, which is rightly pliant, and you do not labor much. Some dogs bay. A sultry night.

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June 16. *Wednesday.* 4.30 A. M. — A low fog on the meadows, but not so much as last night, — a low incense frosting them. The clouds scattered wisps in the sky, like a squadron thrown into disorder at the approach of the sun. The sun now gilds an eastern cloud a broad, bright, coppery-golden edge, fiery bright, notwithstanding which the protuberances of the cloud cast dark shadows ray-like up into the day. The curled dock (*Rumex crispus*) and the *Malva*,[1] the cheese mallows. A new season. The earth looks like a debauchee after the sultry night. Birds sing at this hour as in the spring. You hear that spitting, *dumping* frog and the bullfrogs occasionally still, for the heat is scarcely less than the last night. *No toads now.* The white lily is budded.

Paddle from the ash tree to the swimming-place. The further shore is crowded with polygonums (leaves) and pontederia leaves. There seems to have intervened no night. The heat of the day is unabated. You perspire before sunrise. The bullfrogs boom still. The river appears covered with an almost imperceptible blue film. The sun is not yet over the bank. What wealth in a stagnant river! There is music in every sound in the morning atmosphere. As I look up over the bay, I see the reflections of the meadow woods and the Hosmer hill at a distance, the tops of the trees cut off by a slight ripple. Even the fine grasses on the near bank are distinctly reflected. Owing to the reflections of the distant woods and hills, you seem to be paddling into a vast hollow country, doubly novel and interesting. Thus the voyageur is lured onward to fresh pastures.

[1] [A blank space left for the specific name.]

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The melting heat begins again as soon as the sun gets up. My shoes are covered with the reddish seeds of the grass, for I have been walking in the dew. I hear a stake-driver, like a man at his pump, which sucks,—fit sound for our sluggish river. What is the devil's-needle about? He hovers about a foot above the pads on humming wings thus early, from time to time darting one side as if in pursuit of some invisible prey. Most would suppose the stake-driver the sound of a farmer at a distance at his pump, watering his cattle. It oftener sounds like this than like a stake, but sometimes exactly like a man driving a stake in the meadow. Mistook a crow blackbird, on a dark-brown rock rising out of the water, for a crow or a bittern, referring it to a greater distance than the actual, by some mirage. It had a boat tail, conspicuous when it flew. The bullfrogs lie on the very surface of the pads, showing their great yellow throats, color of the yellow breeches of the old school, and protuberant eyes. His whole back out, revealing a vast expanse of belly. His eyes like ranunculus or yellow lily buds, winking from time to time and showing his large dark-bordered tympanum. Imperturbable-looking. His yellow throat swells up like a small moon at a distance over the pads when he croaks. The floating pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), with the oblong oval leaf floating on the surface, now in bloom. The yellow water ranunculus still yellows the river in the middle, where shallow, in beds many rods long. It is one of the capillary-leaved plants.

It is Bigelow's spotted geranium (*G. maculatum*), or crane's-bill, that we have.

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The fisherman offers you mackerel this sultry weather.

By and by the bidens (marigold) will stand in the river, as now the ranunculus. The summer's fervor will have sunk into it. The spring yellows are faint, cool, innocent as the saffron of the morning compared with the blaze of noon. The autumnal, methinks, are the fruit of the dog-days, heats of manhood or age, not of youth. The former are pure, transparent, crystalline, *viz.* [*sic*] the willow catkins and the early cinquefoils. This ranunculus, too, standing two or three inches above the water, is of a light yellow, especially at a distance. This, I think, is the rule with respect to spring flowers, though there are exceptions.

P. M. — To Great Meadows, 4 o'clock.

All but dogs and Englishmen are housed. It has been quite breezy, even windy, this month. The new foliage has rustled. Already leaves are eaten by insects. I see their excrement in the path; even the pads on the river have many holes in them. The *Viola pedata* and the columbines last into June, but now they are scarce. The *Lysimachia thyrsiflora*, tufted loosestrife, by the Depot Field Brook.

9 P. M. — Down railroad.

Heat lightning in the horizon. A sultry night. A flute from some villager. How rare among men so fit a thing as the sound of a flute at evening! Have not the fireflies in the meadow relation to the stars above, *étincelant?* When the darkness comes, we see stars

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beneath also. The sonorous note of bullfrogs is heard a mile off in the river, the loudest sound this evening. Ever and anon the sound of his trombone comes over the meadows and fields, a-lulling all Concord to sleep. Do not the stars, too, show their light for love, like the fireflies? There are northern lights, shooting high up withal.

Even the botanist calls your fine new flower "a troublesome weed," — hound's-tongue.

June 17. *Thursday.* 4 A. M. — To Cliffs.

No fog this morning. At early dawn, the windows being open, I hear a steady, breathing, cricket-like sound from the chip-bird (?), ushering in the day. Perhaps these mornings are the most memorable in the year, — after a sultry night and before a sultry day, — when, especially, the morning is the most glorious season of the day, when its coolness is most refreshing and you enjoy the glory of the summer gilded or silvered with dews, without the torrid summer's sun or the obscuring haze. The sound of the crickets at dawn after these first sultry nights seems like the dreaming of the earth still continued into the daylight. I love that early twilight hour when the crickets still creak right on with such dewy faith and promise, as if it were still night, — expressing the innocence of morning, — when the creak of the cricket is fresh and bedewed. While the creak of the cricket has that ambrosial sound, no crime can be committed. It buries Greece and Rome past resurrection. The earth-song of the cricket! Before Christianity was, it is. Health! health!

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health! is the burden of its song. It is, of course, that man, refreshed with sleep, is thus innocent and healthy and hopeful. When we hear that sound of the crickets in the sod, the world is not so much with us.

I hear the universal cock-crowing with surprise and pleasure, as if I never heard it before. What a tough fellow! How native to the earth! Neither wet nor dry, cold nor warm, kills him.

Is there any fog in a sultry night? The prudent farmer improves the early morning to do some of his work before the heat becomes too oppressive, while he can use his oxen. As yet no whetting of the scythe. The morning is ambrosial, but the day is a terrestrial *paradise*. Ah, the refreshing coolness of the morning, full of all kinds of fragrance! What is that *little* olivaceous-yellowish bird, whitish beneath, that followed me cheeping under the bushes? The birds sing well this morning, well as ever. The brown thrasher drowns the rest. Lark first, and, in the woods, the red-eye, veery, chewink, oven-bird, wood thrush.

The cistus is well open now, with its broad cup-like flower. One of the most delicate yellow flowers, with large spring-yellow petals and its stamens laid one way. It is hard to get home fresh; is caducous and inclined to droop. The amelanchier berries begin to be red and edible; perhaps they should be quite purple to be ripe. They will be the second berry of the year. The yellow Bethlehem-star is of a deeper yellow than the cistus, a very neat flower, grass-like. The *Viburnum dentatum*.

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P. M. — On the river by Hubbard's meadow.

Looking at a clump of trees and bushes on the meadow, which is commonly flooded in the spring, I saw a middling-sized rock concealed by the leaves lying in the midst, and perceived that this had obtained a place, had made good the locality, for the maples and shrubs which had found a foothold about it. Here the reeds or tender plants were detained and protected. Now concealed by the beneficiaries it had protected? The boulder dropped once on a meadow makes at length a clump of trees there.

Kalm's lily (*Nuphar lutea* var. *Kalmiana* (Gray)) appears to be more abundant on the river than the large one. The polygonum leaves make a dense leafy reddish or red edge to the river. The carrion-flower is very abundant on this river meadow. How many times I must have mistaken it for carrion.

A small thunder-shower came up in the south-west. The thunder sounded like moving a pile of boards in the attic. We could see the increasing outline of the slate-colored falling rain from the black cloud. It passed mainly to the south. We felt only the wind of it at first, but after it appeared to back up and we got some rain. You see large hummocks, one two rods long by one wide, lying high on the bank, as if the farmers had thrown up mud there, and perhaps detect a corresponding hollow, now an open bay amid the pads, from which it was scooped out.

In the damp, warm evening after the rain, the fire-flies appear to be more numerous than ever.

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June 18. The hornet's nest is built with many thin layers of his paper, with an interval of about an eighth of an inch between them, so that his wall is one or two inches thick. This probably for warmth, dryness, and lightness. So sometimes the carpenter has learned to build double walls.

When I attended to the lichens last winter, I made out:—

First, the *Umbilicaria Muhlenbergii*, which Tuckerman says was the favorite rock-tripe in Franklin's Journey.

Second, *U. pustulata.*

Third, *U. Dillenii.*

All common on our rocks. The first like a cinder beneath, the second pustuled, the third like an old dried felt hat.

Parmelia perforata (with great shields).

P. caperata (wrinkled sulphur (H.)).

P. saxatilis (gray rock (Hooker)).

P. conspersa (greenish chestnut shielded (Hooker)).

One of the *Parmelia Citrinæ* (Is it the *P. chrysophthalma* on the apple trees of the Cape? In Loudon, *Borreri chrysophthalma?* What is that on the elm?).

P. stellaris (?).

P. hypoleuca (?), very handsome on black oak.

P. perlata (?).

P. orcina, crustaceous on rocks, yellow and fine.

P. albella.

P. Borreri.

P. scruposa (?), on the ground.

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Sticta pulmonaria, on rocks.

S. glomerulifera (?), at the foot of oaks.

Cetraria lacunosa, perforated, very common. (*C. Islandica* famous. Some kinds dark-colored, some greenish.)

Evernia jubata, on the pitch pine, dark brown.

E. prunastri, stag's-horn, very handsome.

Ramalinas of two or more kinds, especially on red oaks.

Usneas of several kinds, some fine, some coarse, some long, some short, some ferruginous.

Cladonias, as *C. Coccifera*, the red-fruited, on the earth and on stumps.

Cladonias, *Scyphifera*, cup lichens of various kinds, on ground under banks and on stumps.

Cladonias, various cladonias of the reindeer moss kind (which last I have not identified), very common on dry pastures and hills.

Endocarpon miniatum, on moist rocks, Conantum.

Pertusaria papillata (*Porina* Ach.), minute, black, crustaceous.

On a small piece of bark, *Pertusaria faginea*, *Parmelia subfusca*, and *Lecidea parasema* (with the black border).

What is that very common greenish (when wet), pliant, leathery or gelatinous (?) lichen, very common on the earth and amid moss on rocks, with the shield on the under side? There is another, flat, small-leaved, and ash-colored when dry. The dead black birch bark is covered with many handsome small crustaceous lichens.

With roses rose-bugs have come.

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7 P. M. — To Cliffs. No moon.

Methinks I saw and heard goldfinches. Pyrolas are beginning to blossom. The four-leaved loosestrife. The longest days in the year have now come. The sun goes down now (this moment) behind Watatic, from the Cliffs. St. John's-wort is beginning to blossom; looks yellow.

I hear a man playing a clarionet far off. Apollo tending the flocks of King Admetus. How cultivated, how sweet and glorious, is music! Men have brought this art to great perfection, the art of modulating sound, by long practice since the world began. What superiority over the rude harmony of savages! There is something glorious and flower-like in it. What a contrast this evening melody with the occupations of the day! It is perhaps the most admirable accomplishment of man.

June 19. *Saturday*. 8.30 A. M. — To Flag Hill — on which Stow, Acton, and Boxboro corner — with C., with bread and butter and cheese in pocket.

A comfortable breezy June morning. No dust to-day. To explore a segment of country between the Stow hills and the railroad in Acton, west to Boxboro. A fine, clear day, a journey day. A very small blue veronica in the bank by the roadside at Mrs. Hosmer's, apparently the same with that I saw on the Cliffs with toothed leaves. Interesting from being blue. The traveller now has the creak of the cricket to encourage him on all country routes, out of the fresh sod, still fresh as in the dawn, not interrupting his thoughts.

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Very cheering and refreshing to hear so late in the day, this morning sound. The whiteweed colors some meadows as completely as the frosting does a cake. The waving June grass shows watered colors like grain. No mower's scythe is heard. The farmers are hoeing their corn and potatoes. Some low blackberry leaves are covered with a sort of orange-colored mildew or fungus. The clover is now in its glory. Whole fields are *rosed* with it, mixed with sorrel, and looking deeper than it is. It makes fields look luxuriant which are really thinly clad. The air is full of its sweet fragrance. I cannot find the linnæa in Loring's; perhaps because the woods are cut down; perhaps I am too late. The robins sing more than usual, maybe because of the coolness. Buttercups and geraniums cover the meadows, the latter appearing to float on the grass, — of various tints. It has lasted long, this rather tender flower. Methinks there are most *tall* buttercups now. These and the senecio, now getting stale, prevail in the meadows. Green early blueberries on hillsides *passim* remind you of the time when berries will be ripe. This is the ante-huckleberry season, when fruits are green. The green fruit of the thorn is conspicuous, and of the wild cherry and the amelanchiers and the thimble-berry. These are the clover days. The small white-starred flowers of the stitchwort (*Stellaria longifolia*), amid grass and bushes by the meadow-sides. Some grass may perchance be well named bent, if from its bended blade. The light of June is not golden but silvery, not a torrid but somewhat temperate heat. See it reflected from the bent grass and the under sides of leaves.

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Also I perceive faint silvery gleaming ripples where there is a rapid in the river (from railroad bridge at Darby's), without sun on it.

At the pond on Lord's land saw the *Villarsia lacunosa* (Bigelow), common villarsia, with its small rounded heart-shaped leaves like a small pond-lily leaf, and its transparent frosty white flowers, spotting the whole surface like the white petals of some flower which had fallen on it. It belongs to a stagnant pond like this. What is that smooth elliptical leaf, three or four inches long, of the texture of the white lily leaf, peltate and almost, if not quite, vermilion on the under side? I do not see its flower.

The mullein out, with a disagreeable scent, and the dogsbane, with a quite handsome bell-shaped flower, beautifully striped with red (rose red?) within.

Facts collected by a poet are set down at last as winged seeds of truth, samaræ, tinged with his expectation. Oh, may my words be verdurous and sempiternal as the hills! Facts fall from the poetic observer as ripe seeds.

At Willis's Spring under the railroad, a cocoanut shell from the other side of the globe to drink at a New England spring. Water kept cool in the bowels of the earth, the cellar of the earth. The meadow thalictrum there. *Aralia hispida.* The river has a June look, dark, smooth, reflecting surfaces in shade, and the water is refreshing as suggesting coolness. The shadows in and under elms and other trees have not been so rich hitherto. It is grateful to look forward half a mile into some dark umbrageous elm or ash. Is

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Concord River in June

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that the common puffball, now white, convex, nubby? The panicled cornel (under which Gray puts Bigelow's white cornel), with pure white flowers. This and the *Viburnum dentatum*, now out, show handsome corymbs (and the *V. nudum*) in copses, both in sun and *shade*, against and amid the green leaves of the shrubs or trees. Grape in bloom; agreeable perfume to many, to me not so. This is not the meadow fragrance, then, which I have perceived. I hear the wiry phœbe note of the chickadee. Maybe the huckleberry-bird best expresses the season, or the red-eye. The four-leaved loosestrife covers large sandy tracts by the side of the railroad. The new shoots of the oaks are long enough to droop gracefully.

What subtile differences between one season and another! The warmest weather has, perchance, arrived and the longest days, but not the driest. When I remember gathering ripe blackberries on sandy fields or stones by the roadside, the very berries warmed by the sun, I am convinced of this. The seasons admit of infinite degrees in their revolutions.

Found one of the purple orchises in an open meadow.

Left the railroad near Ford Brook Fall and went over a hill on the left at South Acton. The veiny-leaved hawkweed out. A large swelling pasture hill with hickories left for shade and cattle now occupying them. The bark is rubbed smooth and red with their hides. Pleasant to go over the hills, for there there is most air stirring, but you must look out for bulls in the pastures. Saw one here reclining in the shade amid the cows. His short, sanguinary horns betrayed him, and

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we gave him a wide berth, for they are not to be reasoned with.

On our right is Acton, on our left is Stow, and forward, Boxboro. Thus King Richard sailed the Ægean and passed kingdoms on his right and left. Now we are on one of the breezy hills that make the west horizon from Concord, from which we see our familiar Concord hills much changed and reduced in height and breadth. We are in a country very different from Concord, — of swelling hills and long vales, on the bounds of these three towns, more up-countryish. Some clovers are of a beautiful rich transparent (?) red color with their conical heads. A wild rose with large pale-pinkish blossom.

There rose a higher wooded hill on the north side of South Acton. From this hill, on the south side, we selected one from the west (it proved to be Flag Hill on the edge of Boxboro), which we decided to reach by striking more southerly and then following the *ridge* along [?] northwest, so we thought.

It requires considerable skill in crossing a country to avoid the houses and too cultivated parts, — somewhat of the engineer's or gunner's skill, — so to pass a house, if you must go near it through high grass, — pass the enemy's lines where houses are thick, — as to make a hill or wood screen you, — to shut every window with an apple tree. For that route which most avoids the houses is not only the one in which you will be least molested, but it is by far the most agreeable. Saw the handsomest large maple[1] west of this hill that I ever saw. We crawled through the end of a swamp on our

[1] White maple ?

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bellies, the bushes were so thick, to screen us from a house forty rods off whose windows completely commanded the open ground, leaping some broad ditches, and when we emerged into the grass ground, some apple trees near the house beautifully screened us. It is rare that you cannot avoid a grain-field or piece of English mowing by skirting a corn-field or nursery near by, but if you must go through high grass, then step lightly and in each other's tracks.

We soon fell into a swamp where we smelt the *Viburnum nudum* rather strong and unpleasant; a dry swamp filled with high bushes and trees and, beneath, tall ferns, one large pinnate leaf, five or six feet high and one foot broad, making a dense undergrowth in tufts at bottom, spreading every way, — two species of this size, one more compound; these we opened with our hands, making a path through. Completely in cool shade. I steered by the sun, though it was so high now at noon that I observed which way my short shadow fell before I entered the swamp, — for in it we could see nothing of the country around, — and then, by keeping my shadow on a particular side of me, I steered surely, standing still sometimes till the sun came out of a cloud to be sure of our course. Came out at length on a side-hill very near the South Acton line in Stow, another large pasture hill smelling of strawberries, where I saw a large sugar maple, the nearest large one, wild, that I know, and some large ash trees. You could see no more of the surrounding country from the swamp than you could of a village street if you were in the cellars of the houses.

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On this second hill we sat under another walnut, where the ants on and about the tree ran over us as we were eating our dinner. No water had we seen fit to drink since we started. The farmers of Stow and Acton, we fancied, were now taking a nooning. Now our further hill, which had appeared to be but a continuation of a ridge from this, proved to lie west-northwest across a broad valley some one and one half or two miles. So we dashed down the west side of this toward Heather Meadow Brook, where we found the swamp pink in blossom, a most cool refreshing fragrance to travellers in hot weather. I should place this with, if not before, the mayflower. Its flowers, just opened, have caught but few insects. *This* brook we could not drink, it was so tepid and stagnant. In these meadows, I forgot to say, we saw the beautiful wild rose of a deep red color, in blossom, — a rich sight; islands of rose bushes with a profusion of flowers and buds. How suddenly they have expanded! They are first seen in abundance in meadows. Is not this the carnival of the year, when the swamp rose and wild pink are in bloom, the last stage before blueberries come? We were obliged to choose a shallow place and wade Heather Meadow Brook, but we could not drink it. A cooler rill that emptied in smelt and tasted too strongly of muskrats. Then we threaded more swamp, very tangled, where we had to stoop continually, and full of brakes which we could more easily part, but not so wide as the last. And at length we reached the last hillside, but it proved a long way to its top. Still we could find no water fit to drink, and

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were thinking of cool springs gushing from the hillsides under the shade of some maples.

The cow-wheat. The huckleberry-bird still. You see, on distant hills, cows everywhere standing in the shade; sometimes a woodchuck by the side of a clover-field standing up on his hind quarters like a short post. The strawberries are small and dried up.

Now, half-way up this hill, we struck into a thick wood, which, descending, turned into a thicker swamp, sometimes with trees, sometimes high bushes only, which completely shaded us, blueberries, etc.; and I saw the *Prinos lævigatus* (?), smooth winterberry, though the flowers, *in clusters*, appeared fertile and the pedicels were rather long, a half-inch all of them; beneath and around, brakes; under foot, sphagnum and gold-thread and decaying logs. This was the most intricate swamp of all, high on the side of a hill and wide. I climbed a yellow birch covered with lichens, looking as if dead, and another, whence I saw a larch red with cones, but could not see out; but, steering by the sun, at length came out right, on Flag Hill, in the southeast corner of Boxboro, where the three towns corner, and looked west to Harvard and Bolton hills. The country wore a New Hampshire aspect.

Returned by road and railroad to South Acton, crossed the side of the South Acton Hill, and cut across to Ford Brook at the Boxboro road. The *Juncus militaris*[1] in bloom. The prunella already, with few flowers. The adder's-tongue arethusa, with the bulbous. Thus we returned as we went, skirting meadows, threading

[1] *Scirpus lacustris?*

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woods and swamps, and climbing hills, and occasionally skirting or crossing dusty cultivated fields between the rows of corn or potatoes. In the meadows the senecio, bruised, yields the prevailing smell. Saw some canoe (?) birches, probably, which looked like whitewashed trees, so large.

Can that hairy potentilla (but not dichotomous) be the Norway potentilla, already?

The orchis keeps well. One put in my hat this morning, and carried all day, will last fresh a day or two at home. These are peculiar days when you find the purple orchis and the arethusa, too, in the meadows. The fields a walker loves best to strike into are bare, extended, rolling, bordered by copses, with brooks and meadows in sight, sandy beneath the thin sod, where now blackberries and pinks grow, erst rye or oats, — perchance these and stony pastures, where is no high grass nor grain nor cultivated ground nor houses near.

Bathed in the North River by the old stone bridge just before sundown.

Flag Hill is about eight miles *by the road* from Concord. We went much further, going and returning both; but by how much nobler road! Suppose you were to ride to Boxboro, what then? You pass a few teams with their dust, drive through many farmers' barn-yards, between two walls, see where Squire Tuttle lives and barrels his apples, bait your horse at White's Tavern, and so return, with your hands smelling of greasy leather and horsehair and the squeak of a chaise body in your ears, with no new flower nor agreeable experience. But, going as we did, before you got to Boxboro line,

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you often went much further, many times ascended New Hampshire hills, taking the noble road from hill to hill, across swamps and valleys, not regarding political courses and boundaries, many times far west in your thought. It is a journey of a day and a picture of human life.

It was a very good day on the whole, for it was cool in the morning, and there were just clouds enough to shade the earth in the hottest part of the day, and at evening it was comfortably cool again.

The prinos-like shrub in the southwest of Acton swamp, on side of Flag Hill, has from six to nine petals and the same number of stamens on the monopetalous flower, which all comes off together and leaves a distinct calyx of six or seven lanceolate segments and, within, the germ, with apparently three sessile stigmas or short divisions at its apex. All on slender peduncles about five eighths of an inch long, proceeding from nearly a common centre (with leaves).

June 20. 7 P. M. — To Hubbard Bathing-Place.

The blue-eyed grass is shut up. When does it open? Some blue flags are quite a red purple, — dark wine-color. Identified the *Iris prismatica*, Boston iris, with linear leaves and round stem.

The stake-driver is at it in his favorite meadow. I followed the sound. At last I got within two rods, it seeming always to recede and drawing you like a will-o'-the-wisp further away into the meadows. When thus near, I heard some lower sounds at the beginning, much more like striking on a stump or a stake, a dry

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hard sound; and then followed the gurgling, pumping notes, fit to come from a meadow. This was just within the blueberry and *Pyrus arbutifolia* (choke-berry) bushes, and when the bird flew up alarmed, I went to the place, but could see no water, which makes me doubt if water is necessary to it in making the sound. Perhaps it thrusts its bill so deep as to reach the water where it is dry on the surface. It sounds the more like wood-chopping or pumping, because you seem to hear the echo of the stroke or the reverse motion of the pump-handle. I hear them morning and evening. After the warm weather has come, both morning and evening you hear the bittern pumping in the fens. It does not sound loud near at hand, and it is remarkable that it should be heard so far. Perhaps it is pitched on a favorable key. Is it not a call to its mate? Methinks that in the resemblance of this note to rural sounds, to sounds made by farmers, the protection, the security, of the bird is designed. Minott says: "I call them belcher-squelchers. They go *slug-toot, slug-toot, slug-toot.*"

Dry fields have now a reddish tinge from the seeds of the grass.

Lying with my window open, these warm, even sultry nights, I hear the sonorously musical trump of the bullfrogs from time to time, from some distant shore of the river, as if the world were given up to them. By those villagers who live on the street they are never seen and rarely heard by day, but in the quiet sultry nights their notes ring from one end of the town to another. It is as if you had waked up in the infernal regions. I do not know for a time in what world I am.

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It affects my morals, and all questions take a new aspect from this sound. At night bullfrogs lie on the pads and answer to one another all over North America; undoubtedly there is an incessant and uninterrupted chain of sound, *troomp, troomp, troomp*, from the Atlantic to the Pacific (*vide* if they reach so far west), further than Britain's morning gun. It is the snoring music of nature at night. When you wake thus at midnight and hear this sonorous trump from far in the horizon, you need not go to Dante for an idea of the infernal regions. It requires the night air, this sound. How allied to a pad in place, in color, — for his greenish back is the leaf and his yellow throat the flower, — even in form, with his sesquipedality of belly! (And other, white-bellied frogs are white lilies.) Through the summer he lies on the pads, or with his head out, and in the winter buries himself at their roots (?). The bull-paddock! His eyes like the buds of the *Nuphar Kalmiana*. Methinks his skin would stand water without shrinking forever. Gloves made of it for rainy weather, for trout-fishers!! Frogs appear slow to make up their minds, but then they act precipitately. As long as they are here, they are here, and express no intention of removing; but the idea of removing fills them instantaneously, as nature, abhorring, fills a vacuum. Now they are fixed and imperturbable like the Sphinx, and now they go off with short, squatty leaps over the spatter-dock, on the irruption of the least idea.

June 21. *Monday*. 7 P. M. — To Cliffs *via* Hubbard Bathing-Place.

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Cherry-birds. I have not seen, though I think I have heard them before, — their *fine* seringo note, like a vibrating spring in the air. They are a handsome bird, with their crest and chestnut breasts. There is no keeping the run of their goings and comings, but they will be ready for the cherries when they shall be ripe.

The adder's-tongue arethusa smells exactly like a snake. How singular that in nature, too, beauty and offensiveness should be thus combined! In flowers, as well as men, we demand a beauty pure and fragrant, which perfumes the air. The flower which is showy but has no, or an offensive, odor expresses the character of too many mortals.

The swamp-pink bushes have many whitish spongy excrescences. Elder is blossoming; flowers opening now where black berries will be by and by. Panicled andromeda, or privet andromeda.

Nature has looked uncommonly bare and dry to me for a day or two. With our senses applied to the surrounding world we are reading our own physical and corresponding moral revolutions. Nature was so shallow all at once I did not know what had attracted me all my life. I was therefore encouraged when, going through a field this evening, I was unexpectedly struck with the beauty of an apple tree. The perception of beauty is a moral test.

When, in bathing, I rush hastily into the river the clamshells cut my feet.

It is dusky now. Men are fishing on the Corner Bridge. I hear the veery and the huckleberry-bird and the catbird. It is a cool evening, past 8 o'clock. I

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see the tephrosia out through the dusk; a handsome flower.

What rich crops this dry hillside has yielded! First I saw the *Viola pedata* here, and then the lupines and the snapdragon covered it; and now the lupines are done and their pods are left, the tephrosia has taken their place. This small dry hillside is thus a natural garden. I omit other flowers which grow here, and name only those which to some extent cover it or possess it. No eighth of an acre in a cultivated garden would be better clothed, or with a more pleasing variety, from month to month, and while one flower is in bloom you little suspect that which is to succeed and perchance eclipse it. It is a warmly placed dry hillside beneath a wall, very thinly clad with grass. Such spots there are in nature, natural flower gardens. Of this succession I hardly know which to admire the most. It would be pleasant to write the history of one hillside for one year. First and last you have the colors of the rainbow and more, and the various fragrances, which it has not. Blackberries, roses, and dogsbane also are now in bloom here.

I hear neither toads nor bullfrogs at present; they want a warmer night. I hear the sound of distant thunder, though no cloud is obvious, muttering like the roar of artillery. That is a phenomenon of this season. As you walk at evening, you see the light of the flashes in the horizon and hear the muttering of distant thunder, where some village is being refreshed with the rain denied to Concord. We say that showers avoid us, that they go down the river, *i. e.* go off down the Merrimack,

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or keep to the south. Thunder and lightning are remarkable accompaniments to our life, as if to remind us that there always is or should be a kind of battle waging. The thunder is signal guns to us.

The dwarf orchis (*O. herbiola* (Bigelow), *Platanthera flava* (Gray)) at the bathing-place in Hubbard's meadow, not remarkable. The purple orchis is a good flower to bring home. It will keep fresh many days, and its buds open at last in a pitcher of water. Obtuse galium. I observe a rose (called by some moss rose), with a bristly reddish stem; another, with a smooth red stem and but a few prickles; another, with many prickles and bristles. Found the single-flowered broom-rape in Love Lane, under the oak.

June 22. 8 P. M. — Up the Union Turnpike.

We have had a succession of thunder-showers today and at sunset a rainbow. How moral the world is made! This bow is not utilitarian. Methinks men are great in proportion as they are moral. After the rain He sets his bow in the heavens! The world is not destitute of beauty. Ask of the skeptic who inquires, *Cui bono?* why the rainbow was made. While men cultivate flowers below, God cultivates flowers above; he takes charge of the parterres in the heavens. Is not the rainbow a faint vision of God's face? How glorious should be the life of man passed under this arch! What more remarkable phenomenon than a rainbow, yet how little it is remarked!

Near the river thus late, I hear the peetweet, with white-barred wings. The scent of the balm-of-Gilead

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leaves fills the road after the rain. There are the amber skies of evening, the colored skies of both morning and evening! Nature adorns these seasons. Unquestionable truth is sweet, though it were the announcement of our dissolution.

More thunder-showers threaten, and I still can trace those that are gone by. The fireflies in the meadows are very numerous, as if they had replenished their lights from the lightning. The far-retreated thunder-clouds low in the southeast horizon and in the north, emitting low flashes which reveal their forms, appear to lift their wings like fireflies; or it is a steady glare like the glow-worm. Wherever they go, they make a meadow. I hear no toads this cool evening.

June 23. 5 A. M. — To Laurel Glen.

The bobolink still sings, though not as in May. The tall buttercups do not make so much show in the meadows, methinks, as the others did. Or are they beaten down by last night's rain? The small Solomon's-seal is going out of flower and shows small berries. The pretty little *Mitchella repens*, with its twin flowers, spots the ground under the pines with its downy-petalled, cross-shaped flowers and its purplish buds. Gray's *Pyrola asarifolia*[1] for some days, with small roundish thick leaves, and his *P. secunda*, or one-sided pyrola, apparently a little later. Another ripe amelanchier berry, red inclining to purple, with a still downy peduncle, so I suppose it is Bigelow's *Pyrus ovalis*. This is the next fruit after the strawberry. I

[1] [Queried in pencil.]

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suppose the June berry (blue berry) [*sic*] will be the next. The first amelanchier berry I tasted corresponded in leaf to Bigelow's *P. sanguinea*, which is a tree, though that was a low shrub. The grass is not nearly so wet after thunder-showers in the night as after an ordinary dew. Apparently the rain falls so swiftly and hard that it does not rest on the leaves, and then there is no more moisture to be deposited in dew. Yellow diervilla must have been in bloom about a week. Round-leaved cornel resembles the panicled in flower. The mountain laurel, with its milk-white flower, in cool and shady woods, reminds one of the vigor of nature. It is perhaps a first-rate flower, considering its size and evergreenness. Its flower-buds, curiously folded in a ten-angled pyramidal form, are remarkable. A profusion of flowers, with an innocent fragrance. It reminds me of shady mountain-sides where it forms the underwood. I hear my old Walden owl. Its first note is almost like a somewhat peevish scream or squeal of a child shrugging its shoulders, and then succeed two more moderate and musical ones. The wood thrush sings at all hours. I associate it with the cool morning, sultry noon, and serene evening. At this hour it suggests a cool vigor.

What I have called the dwarf choke-cherry is the *Cerasus Pennsylvanica* of Gray, *i. e.* wild red cherry. We have also the *C. Virginiana* (or *obovata* of Bigelow), the true choke-cherry, with a raceme. Both their fruits are now the size of small peas. When does the last blossom? Bigelow says a fortnight before the *serotina*. The herd's-grass shows its tops.

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P. M. — To the mountain laurel in Mason's pasture in Carlisle *via* old Carlisle road.

I hear the trilled dream of many toads from a *road-side* pool, though not quite so loud, perchance, as in the spring, and from time to time, when very near, a sound somewhat like a hoarse chicken. It is what I call a *washing* day, such as we sometimes have when buttercups first appear in the spring, an agreeably cool and clear and breezy day, when all things appear as if washed bright and shine, and, at this season especially, the sound of the wind rustling the leaves is like the rippling of a stream, and you see the light-colored under side of the still fresh foliage, and a sheeny light is reflected from the bent grass in the meadows. Haze and sultriness are far off. The air is cleared and cooled by yesterday's thunder-storms. The river too has a fine, cool, silvery sparkle or sheen on it. You can see far into the horizon, and you can hear the sound of crickets with such feelings as in the cool morning.

The Canada thistles begin to show their purple. What great thistle is that by the wall near Dakin's, not yet in bloom? In the Carlisle road, the rather slender veiny-leaved hawkweed. Rattlesnake-weed is in blossom quite commonly, like a small elevated dandelion on a slender stalk taking the place of the true. These slight yellow flowers to cheer the traveller here; also a *Hieraceum scabrum* (rough) or else *Gronovii* (hairy) of Gray. I saw one of *these last the* 19*th*. These little hawkweeds are to me a rather interesting family, so unpretending, or if only because they make so distinct or marked a family by themselves. Also the

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barberry bushes hang now with small reddish-green fruit, and green huckleberries grow in this grassy road. Cheered by these promises, the traveller holds on his way. But I travel chiefly in the fields or pastures parallel with the road.

These are very agreeable pastures to me; no house in sight, no cultivation. I sit under a large white oak, upon its swelling instep, which makes an admirable seat, and look forth over these pleasant rocky and bushy pastures, where for the most part there are not even cattle to graze them, but patches of huckleberry bushes, and birches, and pitch pines, and barberry bushes, and creeping juniper in great circles, its edges curving upward, and wild roses spotting the green with red, and numerous tufts of indigo-weed, and, above all, great gray boulders lying about far and near, with some barberry bush, perchance, growing half-way up them; and, between all, the short sod of the pasture here and there appears.

The beauty and fragrance of the wild rose are wholly agreeable and wholesome and wear well, and I do not wonder much that men have given the preference to this family of flowers, notwithstanding their thorns. It is hardy and more complete in its parts than most flowers, — its color, buds, fragrance, leaves, the whole bush, frequently its stem in particular, and finally its red or scarlet hips. Here is the sweet-briar in blossom, which to a fragrant flower adds more fragrant leaves. I take the wild rose buds to my chamber and put them in a pitcher of water, and they will open there the next day, and a single flower will perfume a room; and

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then, after a day, the petals drop off, and new buds open.

I am inclined to think that my hat, whose lining is gathered in midway so as to make a shelf, is about as good a botany-box as I could have and far more convenient, and there is something in the darkness and the vapors that arise from the head — at least if you take a bath — which preserves flowers through a long walk. Flowers will frequently come fresh out of this botany-box at the end of the day, though they have had no sprinkling.

As I walk through these old deserted wild orchards, half pasture, half huckleberry-field, the air is filled with fragrance from I know not what source. How much purer and sweeter it must be than the atmosphere of the streets, rendered impure by the filth about our houses! It is quite offensive often when the air is heavy at night. The roses in the front yard do not atone for the sink and pigsty and cow-yard and jakes in the rear.

I sit on one of these boulders and look south to Ponkawtasset. Looking west, whence the wind comes, you do not see the under sides of the leaves, but, looking east, every bough shows its under side; those of the maples are particularly white. All leaves tremble like aspen leaves. Perhaps on those westward hills where I walked last Saturday the fields are somewhat larger than commonly with us, and I expand with a sense of freedom. The side of the hill commonly makes but one field. They begin to partake of the character of up-country pastures a little more. Two or three large

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boulders, fifteen or twenty feet square, make a good foreground in this landscape, for the gray color of the rock contrasts well with the green of the surrounding and more distant hills and woods and fields. They serve instead of cottages for a wild landscape as perches or *points d'appui* for the eye.

The red color of cattle, also, is agreeable in a landscape; or let them be what color they may, — red, black, white, or mouse-color, or spotted, all which I have seen this afternoon. The cows which, confined to the barn or barn-yard all winter, were covered with filth, after roaming in flowery pastures possess now clean and shining coats, and the cowy odor is without alloy. Indeed they make such an impression of neatness (I think of a white cow, spotted with red, and her two sizable calves of like color, which I saw this afternoon) that one who was unacquainted with etymology might be excused if he gave a new signification to the word neat as applied to cattle, and did not refer it to *knittan*, to butt (*i. e.* horned cattle).

It seems natural that rocks which have lain under the heavens so long should be gray, as it were an intermediate color between the heavens and the earth. The air is the thin paint in which they have been dipped and brushed with the wind. Water, which is more fluid and like the sky in its nature, is still more like it in color. Time will make the most discordant materials harmonize.

I see the silk-green-abdomened fly on cow-dung in the road.

There are some very handsome white pines and pine

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groves on the left of the road just before you enter the woods. They are of second growth, of course, broad and perfect, with limbs almost to the ground, and almost as broad as they are high, their fine leaves trembling with silvery light, very different from the tall masts of the primitive wood, naked of limbs beneath and crowded together. So soft, and with such a mass of foliage through which the wind soughs. But you must be careful how you sit beneath them on account of pitch. Somewhat of a conical form.

This grassy road now dives into the wood, as if it were entering a cellar or bulkhead, the shadow is so deep. June is the first month for shadows. How is it in July? And now I scent the pines. I plucked a blue geranium in a meadow near the Kibbe Place, which appeared to me remarkably fragrant, like lilies and strawberries combined. The path I cut through the swamp late last fall is much more grown up than I expected. The sweet fragrance of swamp-pinks fills all the swamps, and when I look down, I see commonly the leaf of the gold-thread. The mountain laurels in Mason's pasture have not a blossom. They appear to have been partly killed by the winter or else late frosts; the leaves many of them are turned red and dead. And yet they sometimes blossom, for I see the remains of former flowers. They grow in the open pasture. Here is another pasture, with fields of sweet-fern bushes, and the humble but beautiful red lambkill everywhere, alone or mingled with other shrubs. Ever the walker will be attracted by some deeper red blossom than usual. You cannot bring it home in good condition;

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else, perchance, it would be better known. With white pines and birches, beginning to prevail over the grass.

There are interesting groves of young soft white pines eighteen feet high, whose vigorous yellowish-green shoots of this season, from three to eighteen inches long, at the extremities of all the branches, contrast remarkably with the dark green of the old leaves. I observe that these shoots are bent and, what is more remarkable, all one way, *i. e.* to the east, almost at a right angle the topmost ones, and I am reminded of the observation in Henry's Adventures, that the Indians guided themselves in cloudy weather by this mark. All these shoots, excepting those low down on the east side, are bent toward the east. I am very much pleased with this observation, confirming that of the Indians. I was singularly impressed when I first observed that all the young pines in this pasture obeyed this law, without regard to the direction of the wind or the shelter of other trees. To make myself more sure of the direction, as it was not easy to determine it exactly, standing on one side, where so many shoots were bent in the air, I went behind the trees on the west till the bent shoot appeared as a straight line, and then, by observing my shadow and guessing at the time of day, I decided that their direction was due east. This gives me more satisfaction than any observation which I have made for a long time. This is true of the rapidly growing shoots. How long will this phenomenon avail to guide the traveller? How soon do they become erect? A natural compass. How few civilized men probably have ever made this observation, so important to the

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savage! How much may there have been known to his woodcraft which has not been detected by science! At first I remarked the shoots of a distinct yellowish green, contrasting with the rest of the tree, then that they were not upright but bent more or less, and next that they were all inclined one way, as if bent by the wind, and finally that they were all bent east, without regard to the wind.

On the side of this pasture, I hear the red-eye in the swamp and the cool peep of a robin who has young, amid the pines. How quick are cattle and horses to hear the step of a walker! I pass much nearer to men at work in a field without being observed than to cattle or horses feeding. The latter hear me or, perchance, scent me if they do not look up. I observed a bullock this afternoon, when all his companions on a side-hill were already looking at me, suddenly whirl round to stare, as if he had detected from their attitude that some object engaged them. Then how curiously a whole herd will leave off grazing, and stare till you have passed, and if you have a dog, will think of their calves and make demonstrations of tossing him!

I returned to the bridle road and thence over Hubbard's oak grove hill. We have few handsome open oak groves left, but how handsome and cool and bosky they look in this breezy weather!

From N. Barrett's road I look over the Great Meadows. The meadows are the freshest, the greenest green in the landscape, and I do not (at this hour, at any rate) see any bent grass light. The river is a singularly deep living blue, the bluest blue, such as I rarely ob-

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serve, and its shore is silvered with white maples, which show the under sides of their leaves, stage upon stage, in leafy towers. Methinks the leaves continue to show their under sides some time after the wind has done blowing. The southern edge of the meadow is also silvered with (I suppose) the red maple. Then there is the darker green of the forest, and the reddish, brownish, and bluish green of grass-lands and pastures and grain-fields, and the light-blue sky. There are not clouds enough in the sky to attract you to-day.

The sweet-briar bud which I brought home opened in the night. Is that the habit of roses?

June 24. P. M. — To White Pond.

The keys of the white ash cover the trees profusely, a sort of mulberry brown, an inch and a half long, handsome. The *Vaccinium macrocarpon*, probably for some days.

The *Calopogon pulchellus* (*Cymbidium* of Bigelow), grass pink of some, a pretty purple arethusa-like flower in a shady low copse on Corner road, near the *Asclepias quadrifolia*, a rather striking flower with two umbels of small pink and white flowers standing above the surrounding herbage. *Spiræa salicifolia* by the roadsides. *Archangelica atropurpurea*, interesting for its great umbels and vigorous growth of its purplish but rank-smelling stem. It is one of the most forward early leaves in warm springy places. I perceive excrescences on the grape leaves and vines, resembling in their form and disposition the grape clusters that are to be.

The drifting white downy clouds are to the landsman

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what sails on the sea are to him that dwells by the shore, — objects of a large, diffusive interest. When the laborer lies on the grass or in the shade for rest, they do not too much tax or weary his attention. They are unobtrusive. I have not heard that white clouds, like white houses, made any one's eyes ache. They are the flitting sails in that ocean whose bounds no man has visited. They are like all great themes, always at hand to be considered, or they float over us unregarded. Far away they float in the serene sky, the most inoffensive of objects, or, near and low, they smite us with their lightnings and deafen us with their thunder. We know no Ternate nor Tidore grand enough whither we can imagine them bound. There are many mare's-tails to-day, if that is the name. What could a man learn by watching the clouds? The objects which go over our heads unobserved are vast and indefinite. Even those clouds which have the most distinct and interesting outlines are commonly below the zenith, somewhat low in the heavens, and seen on one side. They are among the most glorious objects in nature. A sky without clouds is a meadow without flowers, a sea without sails. Some days we have the mackerel fleet. But our devilishly industrious laborers rarely lie in the shade. How much better if they were to take their nooning like the Italians, relax and expand and never do any work in the middle of the day, enjoy a little sabbath in the middle of the day.

I still perceive that wonderful fragrance from the meadow (?) on the Corner causeway, intense as ever. It is one of those effects whose cause it

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is best not to know, perchance. Uncommonly cool weather now, after warm days and nights for a week or more. I see *many* grasshoppers for the first time (only single ones before), in the grass in the White Pond road. They describe a thousand little curves as I walk, with an ominous dry rustling of their wings, about three quarters of an inch long. Come to eat the grass? It is the biggest game our dog starts. Much of the June-grass is dead; *most* of it in dry fields.

White Pond very handsome to-day. The shore alive with pollywogs of large size, which ripple the water on our approach. There is a fine sparkle on the water, though not equal to the fall one quite. The water is very high, so that you cannot walk round it, but it is the more pleasant while you are swimming to see how the trees *actually* rise out of it on all sides. It bathes their feet. The pines now hold somewhat of a subordinate rank amid the flourishing evergreens.

The dog worried a woodchuck, half grown, which did not turn its back and run into its hole, but backed into it and faced him and us, gritting its teeth and prepared to die. But even this little fellow was able to defend himself against the dog with his sharp teeth. That fierce gritting of their teeth is a remarkable habit with these animals.

I am disappointed to notice to-day that most of the pine-tops incline to the west, as if the wind had to do with it. The panicled andromeda has froth on it. The *Linnæa borealis* just going out of blossom. I should

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have found it long ago. Its leaves densely cover the ground.

June 25. Just as the sun was rising this morning, under clouds, I saw a rainbow in the west horizon, the lower parts quite bright.

> "Rainbow in the morning,
> Sailors take warning;
> Rainbow at night
> Sailors' delight."

A few moments after, it rained heavily for a half-hour; and it has continued cloudy as well as cool most of the day. I observe that young birds are usually of a duller color and more speckled than old ones, as if for their protection in their tender state. They have not yet the markings (and the beauty) which distinguish their species, and which betray it often, but by their colors are merged in the variety of colors of the season.

P. M. — To Cliffs, 4 P. M.

It is cool and cloudy weather in which the crickets, still heard, remind you of the fall, — a clearer ring to their creak. Also the prunella, cool in the grass, and the johnswort make you think it late in the year. *Maruta Cotula*, or mayweed, — why so named? — just begins, with its strong-scented leaf. It has taken up its position by the roadside close to the ruts, — in bad taste. The *Prinos verticillatus*, with its small, neat, scentless white flower. Dogwood (*Rhus venenata*). The bobolink and golden robin are occasionally heard nowadays. Sometimes the lambkill flowers form a very even rounded, close cylinder, six inches long and two

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and a half in diameter, of rich red saucer-like flowers, the counterpart of the *latifolia* in flowers and flower-buds, but higher colored. I regard it as a beautiful flower neglected. It has a slight but not remarkable scent. The *Convolvulus sepium*, bindweed; morning-glory is the best name. It always refreshes me to see it. Some saw it the 19th. In the morning and cloudy weather, says Gray. I associate it with holiest morning hours. It may preside over my morning walks and thoughts. There is a flower for every mood of the mind.

Methinks roses oftenest display their high colors, colors which invariably attract all eyes and betray them, against a dark ground, as the dark green or the shady recesses of the bushes and copses, where they show to best advantage. Their enemies do not spare the open flower for an hour. Hence, if for no other reason, their buds are most beautiful. Their promise of perfect and dazzling beauty, when their buds are just beginning to expand,— beauty which they can hardly contain, — as in most youths, commonly surpasses the fulfillment of their expanded flowers. The color shows fairest and brightest in the bud. The expanded flower has no higher or deeper tint than the swelling bud exposed. This raised a dangerous expectation. The season when wild roses are in bloom should have some preëminence, methinks.

Agreeable is this cool cloudy weather, favorable to thought, after the sultry days. *Linaria vulgaris*, butter-and-eggs, toad-flax, on Fair Haven. (Was seen the 19th.) It is rather rich-colored, with a not disagreeable

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scent. It is called a troublesome weed. Flowers must not be too profuse nor obtrusive; else they acquire the reputation of weeds. It grows almost like a cotton-grass, so above and distinct from its leaves, in wandering patches higher and higher up the side of the hill. I see no reddish ferns in the meadows now (looking from the hill), but much of the grass and the ferns, perhaps, is of a yellowish green, as if retaining the sunlight in this cloudy weather. Grateful the coolness which compels me to wear a thick coat.

One man lies in his words, and gets a bad reputation; another in his manners, and enjoys a good one.

The air is clear, as if a cool, dewy brush had swept the vales and meadows of all haze. A liquid coolness invests them, as if their midnight aspect were suddenly revealed to midday. The mountain outline is remarkably distinct, and the intermediate earth appears more than usually scooped out, like a vast saucer sloping upward to its sharp mountain rim. The mountains are washed in air. The sunshine, now seen far away on fields and hills in the northwest, looks cool and wholesome, like the yellow grass in the meadows.

I am too late for the white pine flowers. The cones are half an inch long and greenish, and the male flowers effete.

The sun now comes out bright, though westering, and shines on Fair Haven, which, rippled by the wind, is of an unusual clay-muddy color. The *Specularia perfoliata*, clasping bellflower, on the Cliffs is very pretty, and has apparently been out several days. There are little recesses, a rod or two square, in bosky woods

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which have not grown fast, where a fine, wiry grass invites to lie down in the shade, under the shrub oaks, on the edge of the Well Meadow Head field.

8.30 P. M. — To Conantum.

Moon half full. Fields dusky; the evening star and one other bright one near the moon. It is a cool but pretty still night. Methinks I am less thoughtful than I was last year at this time. The flute I now hear from the Depot Field does not find such caverns to echo and resound in in my mind, — no such answering depths. Our minds should echo at least as many times as a Mammoth Cave to every musical sound. It should awaken reflections in us. I hear not many crickets. Some children calling their kitten home by some endearing name. Now his day's work is done, the laborer plays his flute, — only possible at this hour. Contrasted with his work, what an accomplishment! Some drink and gamble. He plays some well-known march. But the music is not in the tune; it is in the sound. It does not proceed from the trading nor political world. He practices this ancient art. There are light, vaporous clouds overhead; dark, fuscous ones in the north. The trees are turned black. As candles are lit on earth, stars are lit in the heavens. I hear the bullfrog's trump from afar.

Now I turn down the Corner road. At this quiet hour the evening wind is heard to moan in the hollows of your face, mysterious, spirit-like, conversing with you. It can be heard now only. The whip-poor-will sings. I hear a laborer going home, coarsely singing to

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himself. Though he has scarcely had a thought all day, killing weeds, at this hour he sings or talks to himself. His humble, earthy contentment gets expression. It is kindred in its origin with the notes or music of many creatures. A more fit and natural expression of his mood, this humming, than conversation is wont to be. The fireflies appear to be flying, though they may be stationary on the grass stems, for their perch and the nearness of the ground are obscured by the darkness, and now you see one here and then another there, as if it were one in motion. Their light is singularly bright and glowing to proceed from a living creature. Nature loves variety in all things, and so she adds glow-worms to fireflies, though I have not noticed any this year. The great story of the night is the moon's adventures with the clouds. What innumerable encounters she has had with them! When I enter on the moonlit causeway, where the light is reflected from the glistening alder leaves, and their deep, dark, liquid shade beneath strictly bounds the firm damp road and narrows it, it seems like autumn. The rows of willows completely fence the way and appear to converge in perspective, as I had not noticed by day. The bullfrogs are of various tones. Some horse in a distant pasture whinnies; dogs bark; there is that dull, dumping sound of frogs, as if a bubble containing the lifeless sultry air of day burst on the surface, a belching sound. When two or more bullfrogs trump together, it is a ten-pound-ten note. In Conant's meadow I hear the gurgling of unwearied water, the trill of a toad, and go through the cool, primordial liquid air that has settled there.

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As I sit on the great door-step, the loose clapboards on the old house rattle in the wind weirdly, and I seem to hear some wild mice running about on the floor, and sometimes a loud crack from some weary timber trying to change its position.

On Conantum-top, all white objects like stones are observed, and dark masses of foliage, at a distance even. How distant is day and its associations! The light, dry cladonia lichens on the brows of hills reflect the moonlight well, looking like rocks. The night wind comes cold and whispering, murmuring weirdly from distant mountain-tops. No need to climb the Andes or Himalayas, for brows of lowest hills are highest mountain-tops in cool moonlight nights. Is it a cuckoo's chuckling note I heard? Occasionally there is something enormous and monstrous in the size and distance of objects. A rock, is it? or an elephant asleep? Are these trees on an upland or a lowland? Or do they skirt the brink of a sea-beach? When I get there, shall I look off over the sea? The whiteweed is the only obvious flower. I see the tops of the rye wave, and grain-fields are more interesting than by day. The water is dull-colored, hardly more bright than a rye-field. There is dew only in the low grounds. What were the firefly's light, if it were not for darkness? The one implies the other.

You may not suspect that the milk of the cocoanut which is imported from the other side of the world is mixed. So pure do some truths come to us, I trust.

What a mean and wretched creature is man! By and by some Dr. Morton may be filling your cranium with white mustard seed to learn its internal capacity. Of

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all ways invented to come at a knowledge of a living man, this seems to me the worst, as it is the most belated. You would learn more by once paring the toenails of the living subject. There is nothing out of which the spirit has more completely departed, and in which it has left fewer significant traces.

June 26. I have not put darkness, duskiness, enough into my night and moonlight walks. Every sentence should contain some twilight or night. At least the light in it should be the yellow or creamy light of the moon or the fine beams of stars, and not the white light of day. The peculiar dusky serenity of the sentences must not allow the reader to forget that it is evening or night, without my saying that it is dark. Otherwise he will, of course, presume a daylight atmosphere.

The earliest water surfaces, as I remember, as soon as the ice is melted, present as fair and matured scenes, as soft and warm, reflecting the sky through the clear atmosphere, as in midsummer, — far in advance of the earth. The earliest promise of the summer, — is it not in the smooth reflecting surface of woodland lakes in which the ice is just melted? Those liquid eyes of nature, blue or black or even hazel, deep or shallow, clear or turbid; green next the shore, the color of their iris.

P. M. — Boated up the Assabet.

The *Nymphæa odorata*, water nymph, sweet water-lily, pond-lily, in bloom. A superb flower, our lotus, queen of the waters. Now is the solstice in still waters. How sweet, innocent, wholesome its fragrance! How pure its white petals, though its root is in the mud! It

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must answer in my mind for what the Orientals say of the lotus flower. Probably the first a day or two since. To-morrow, then, will be the first Sabbath when the young men, having bathed, will walk slowly and soberly to church in their best clothes, each with a lily in his hand or bosom, — with as long a stem as he could get. At least I used to see them go by and come into church smelling a pond-lily, when I used to go myself. So that the flower is to some extent associated with bathing in Sabbath mornings and going to church, its odor contrasting and atoning for that of the sermon. We now have roses on the land and lilies on the water, — both land and water have done their best, — now *just* after the longest day. Nature says, "You behold the utmost I can do." And the young women carry their finest roses on the other hand. Roses and lilies. The floral days. The red rose, with the intense color of many suns concentrated, spreads its tender petals perfectly fair, its flower not to be overlooked, modest yet queenly, on the edges of shady copses and meadows, against its green leaves, surrounded by blushing buds, of perfect form; not only beautiful, but rightfully commanding attention; unspoiled by the admiration of gazers. And the water-lily floats on the smooth surface of slow waters, amid rounded shields of leaves, bucklers, red beneath, which simulate a green field, perfuming the air. Each instantly the prey of the spoiler, — the rose-bug and water-insects. How transitory the perfect beauty of the rose and lily! The highest, intensest color belongs to the land, the purest, perchance, to the water. The lily is perhaps the only

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flower which all are eager to pluck; it may be partly because of its inaccessibility to most. The farmers' sons will frequently collect every bud that shows itself above the surface within half a mile. They are so infested by insects, and it is so rare you get a perfect one which has opened itself, — though these only are perfect, — that the buds are commonly plucked and opened by hand. I have a faint recollection of pleasure derived from smoking dried lily stems before I was a man. I had commonly a supply of these. I have never smoked anything more noxious. I used to amuse myself with making the yellow drooping stamens rise and fall by blowing through the pores of the long stem.

I see the nests of the bream, with each its occupant, hollowed, scooped in the sunny water, and partly shaded by the leaves of the limnanthemum, or floating heart, now in blossom, and the *Potamogeton natans*, or pondweed. Under the cool, glossy green leaves of small swamp white oaks, and leaning against their scaly bark near the water, you see the wild roses, five or six feet high, looking forth from the shade; but almost every bush or copse near the river or in low land which you approach these days emits the noisome odor of the carrion-flower, so that you would think that all the dead dogs had drifted to that shore. All things, both beautiful and ugly, agreeable and offensive, are expressed in flowers, — all kinds and degrees of beauty and all kinds of foulness. For what purpose has nature made a flower to fill the lowlands with the odor of carrion? Just so much beauty and virtue as there is in the world, and just so much ugliness and vice, you see

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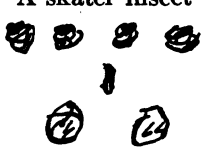
expressed in flowers. Each human being has his flower, which expresses his character. In them nothing is concealed, but everything published. Many a villager whose garden bounds on the river, when he approaches the willows and cornels by the river's edge, thinks that some carrion has lodged on his shore, when it is only the carrion-flower he smells.

Though the water is many feet deep, I hear very plainly the grating sound of the pole on the sandy bottom communicated through the wood. Some of the hemlock twigs, especially those that hang low about the trunks, broad, flat, and triangular like fans, edged with the recent yellowish green leaves about an inch deep, are very handsome and rich, shaped, the whole, like a fan or reticule, a foot base by eight or nine inches altitude. So many rich green drooping fans edged with yellowish hanging about the trunk. All shadows or shadowlets on the sandy bottom of the river are interesting. All are circular, or nearly so, almost lenticular, for they appear to have thickness; even the shadows of grass blades are broken into several separate circles of shade. Such is the fabulous or Protean character of the water lights. A skater insect casts seven flat globular shades, —  four smaller in front, two larger behind, and the smallest of all in the centre. From the shadow on the bottom you cannot guess the form on the surface; everything is transmuted by the water. The shadow, however small, is black within, edged with a sunny halo, corresponding to the day's twilights; and a certain liquidness is imparted to

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the whole by the incessant motion from the undulation of the surface. The oblong leaves of the *Potamogeton hybridus*,[1] now in seed, make a circular shadow also, — somewhat coin-like. A halo produced by the thick atmosphere which the water is. These bright, sparkling brook and river bottoms are the true gold washings, — where the stream has washed the pebbly earth so long.

It is pleasant to walk in sprout-lands now in June, there is so much light reflected from the under side of the new foliage. The rich meadows, too, reflect much of the bluish light from the *bent* grass. We land on the south side opposite S. Barrett's, where the innocent forest trees, become dead logs, are unceasingly and relentlessly, I know not for what crime, drawn and quartered and sawn asunder (after being torn limb from limb), with an agony of sound. There are some interesting retired natural meadows here, concealed by the woods near the river-bank, which are never cut, long, narrow, and winding, full of a kind of stiff, dry cut-grass and tender meadow-sweet and occasional cranberry patches (now in bloom), with a high border, almost as high as the meadows are wide, of maples, birches, swamp white oaks, and alders, etc. The flashing, silvery light from the under sides of the maple leaves, — high, rippling, washing towers, far and near, — such a cool, refreshing, breezy, light-flashing look, they are very memorable. When you think you have reached the end of such a winding meadow, you pass between two alders where the copses meet, and emerge into another meadow beyond. I suppose that these

[1] [Queried in pencil.]

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meadows are as nearly in their primitive state as any; that we see there how this country looked (in one of its aspects) a thousand years ago. What difference to the meadow-sweet or the swamp white oak, or to the silver-flashing maple leaves, a thousand years ago or to-day? We noticed two or three large wood tortoises, showing but little of their orange-skins, there. The meadows, for the most part, dry enough for walking. The prevalence of the meadow-sweet (at least) distinguishes these meadows from the ordinary ones. Picked two blue blueberries where they lay over a rock.

Forded the river with our clothes on our heads. The rounded heaps of stones, whether made by suckers or lamprey eels, are among the curiosities of the river.

From the sand-bank we looked at the arched bridge while a traveller in a simple carriage with a single pair of wheels went over it. It interested me because the stratum of earth beneath him was so thin that he appeared quite in the air, while he sat with his elbows on his knees, entertaining all earthly thoughts, or thoughtless, while [we] looked directly beneath him through much air to a fair and distant landscape beyond. Channing says that is what men go to Italy to see. I love to see the firm earth mingled with the sky, like the spray of the sea tossed up. Is there not always, whenever an arch is constructed, a latent reference to its beauty? The arch supports itself, like the stars, by gravity, — by always falling never falls (*semper cadendo nunquam cadit*). But it should not be by their architecture but by their abstract thoughts that a nation should seek to commemorate itself. How much more

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admirable the Bhagavat Geeta than all the ruins of the East! Methinks there are few specimens of architecture so perfect as a verse of poetry. Architectural remains are beautiful not intrinsically and absolutely, but from association. They are the luxury of princes. A simple and independent mind does not toil at the bidding of any prince, nor is its material silver and gold, or marble. The American's taste for architecture, whether Grecian or Gothic, is like his taste for olives and wine, though the last may be made of logwood. Consider the beauty of New York architecture, — and there is no very material difference between this and Baalbec, — a vulgar adornment of what is vulgar. To what end pray is so much stone hammered? An insane ambition to perpetuate the memory of themselves by the amount of hammered stone they leave. Such is the glory of nations. What if equal pains were taken to smooth and polish their manners? Is not the builder of more consequence than the material? One sensible act will be more memorable than a monument as high as the moon. I love better to see stones in place. The grandeur of Thebes was a vulgar grandeur. She was not simple, and why should I be imposed on by the hundred gates of her prison? More sensible is a rod of stone wall that bounds an honest man's field than a hundred-gated Thebes that has mistaken the true end of life, that places hammered marble before honesty. The religion and civilization which are barbaric and heathenish build splendid temples, but Christianity does not. It needs no college-bred architect. All the stone a nation hammers goes toward its tomb only. It

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buries itself alive.[1] The too exquisitely cultured I avoid as I do the theatre. Their life lacks reality. They offer me wine instead of water. They are surrounded by things that can be bought.

The alders, birches, etc., are covered with white *winged* aphides (?), which whiten my clothes, — perfect showers of them.

In some shallow parts of the North River, as at the Leaning Hemlocks, where some large rocks partially bridge the stream, I notice smaller stones strewn between in a low wall, as if they had helped form an Indian weir once.

Some names are to be retained, not because they are descriptive, but because they strike the fancy and suggest ideas in harmony with the flower.

June 27. Sunday. P. M. — To Bear Hill, Lincoln.

The epilobium, spiked willow herb, shows its showy pale-purple spikes (pinkish?). It showed some color the 15th. I will set it down to the 20th. *Epilobium angustifolium*, one of the most conspicuous flowers at this season on dry open hillsides in the woods, sprout-lands. That tree-like cornel by the Heywood Meadow Brook, now showing green fruit, must be the alternate-leaved cornel. I perceive the morning-glory open at midday, but the worse for the wear. I still perceive that ambrosial sweetness from the meadows in some places. Give me the strong, rank scent of ferns in the spring for vigor; just blossoming late in the spring.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 63, 64; Riv. 92, 93.]

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A healthy and refined nature would always derive pleasure from the landscape. As long as the bodily vigor lasts, man sympathizes with nature.

Looking from Bear Hill, I am struck by the yellowish green of meadows, almost like an ingrained sunlight. Perhaps they have that appearance because the fields generally incline now to a reddish-brown green. The freshness of the year in most fields is already past. The tops of the early grass are white, killed by the worm. It is somewhat hazy, yet I can just distinguish Monadnock. It is a good way to describe the density of a haze to say how distant a mountain can be distinguished through it, or how near a hill is obscured by it.

Saw a very large white ash tree, three and a half feet in diameter, in front of the house which White formerly owned, under this hill, which was struck by lightning the 22d, about 4 P. M. The lightning apparently struck the top of the tree and scorched the bark and leaves for ten or fifteen feet downward, then began to strip off the bark and enter the wood, making a ragged narrow furrow or crack, till, reaching one of the upper limbs, it apparently divided, descending on both sides and entering deeper and deeper into the wood. At the first general branching, it had got full possession of the tree in its centre and tossed off the main limbs butt foremost, making holes in the ground where they struck; and so it went down in the midst of the trunk to the earth, where it apparently exploded, rending the trunk into six segments, whose tops, ten or twenty feet long, were rayed out on every side at an angle of about

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30° from a perpendicular, leaving the ground bare directly under where the tree had stood, though they were still fastened to the earth by their roots. The lightning appeared to have gone off through the roots, furrowing them as the branches, and through the earth, making a furrow like a plow, four or five rods in one direction, and in another passing through the cellar of the neighboring house, about thirty feet distant, scorching the tin milk-pans and throwing dirt into the milk, and coming out the back side of the house in a furrow, splitting some planks there. The main body of the tree was completely stripped of bark, which was cast in every direction two hundred feet; and large pieces of the inside of the tree, fifteen feet long, were hurled with tremendous force in various directions, one into the side of [a] shed, smashing it, another burying itself in a wood-pile. The heart of the tree lay by itself. Probably a piece as large as [a] man's leg could not have been sawn out of the trunk which would not have had a crack in it, and much of it was very finely splintered. The windows in the house were broken and the inhabitants knocked down by the concussion. All this was accomplished in an instant by a kind of fire out of the heavens called lightning, or a thunderbolt, accompanied by a crashing sound. For what purpose? The ancients called it Jove's bolt, with which he punished the guilty, and we moderns understand it no better. There was displayed a Titanic force, some of that force which made and can unmake the world. The brute forces are not yet wholly tamed. Is this of the character of a wild beast, or is it guided by intelligence

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and mercy? If we trust our natural impressions, it is a manifestation of brutish force or vengeance, more or less tempered with justice. Yet it is our own consciousness of sin, probably, which suggests the idea of vengeance, and to a righteous man it would be merely sublime without being awful.

This is one of those instances in which a man hesitates to refer his safety to his prudence, as the putting up of a lightning-rod. There is no lightning-rod by which the sinner can finally avert the avenging Nemesis. Though I should put up a rod if its utility were satisfactorily demonstrated to me, yet, so mixed are we, I should feel myself safe or in danger quite independently of the senseless rod. Yet there is a degree of faith and righteousness in putting up a rod, as well as trusting without one, though the latter, which is the rarest, I feel to be [the] most effectual rod of the two. It only suggests that impunity in respect to all forms of death or disease, whether sickness or casualty, is only to be attained by moral integrity. It is the faith with which we take medicine that cures us. Otherwise we may be cured into greater disease. In a violent tempest, we both fear and trust. We are ashamed of our fear, for we know that a righteous man would not suspect danger, nor incur any. Wherever a man feels fear, there is an avenger. The savage's and the civilized man's instincts are right. Science affirms too much. Science assumes to show *why* the lightning strikes a tree, but it does not show us the moral *why* any better than our instincts did. It is full of presumption. Why should trees be struck? It is not enough to say be-

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cause they are in the way. Science answers, *Non scio*, I am ignorant. All the phenomena of nature need [to] be seen from the point of view of wonder and awe, like lightning; and, on the other hand, the lightning itself needs to [be] regarded with serenity, as the most familiar and innocent phenomena are. There runs through the righteous man's moral spinal column a rod with burnished points to heaven, which conducts safely away into the earth the flashing wrath of Nemesis, so that it merely clarifies the air. This moment the confidence of the righteous man erects a sure conductor within him; the next, perchance, a timid staple diverts the fluid to his vitals. If a mortal be struck with a thunderbolt *coelo sereno*, it is naturally felt to be more awful and vengeful. Men are probably nearer to the essential truth in their superstitions than in their science. Some places are thought to be particularly exposed to lightning, some oaks on hilltops, for instance.

I meet the partridge with her brood in the woods, a perfect little hen. She spreads her tail into a fan and beats the ground with her wings fearlessly within a few feet of me, to attract my attention while her young disperse; but they keep up a faint, wiry kind of peep, which betrays them, while she mews and squeaks as if giving them directions.

Chestnut trees are budded.

I picked a handful or two of blueberries, though strawberries are now in their prime. They follow hard upon the first red amelanchier berries. Blueberries and huckleberries deserve to be celebrated, such simple, wholesome, universal fruits, food for the gods and for

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aboriginal men. They are so abundant that they concern our race much. Tournefort called some of this genus, at least, *Vitis Idæa*, which apparently means the vine of Mount Ida. I cannot imagine any country without this kind of berry. Berry of berries. On which men live like birds. Still covering our hills as when the red men lived here. Are they not the principal wild fruit? Huckleberry puddings and pies, and huckleberries and milk, are regular and important dishes.

Hedyotis longifolia, a smaller-flowered houstonia, rather interesting, on the top of Bear Hill.

Have I not omitted to mention the star-flowered cerastium, like the early *Stellaria media*. I saw it at least as early as the last week of May.

June 28. *Œnothera biennis*, evening-primrose, with its conspicuous flowers but rather unsightly stem and leaves. The *Rubus odorata*, purple flowering raspberry, in gardens. Potatoes for some time.

Evening. 7 P. M. — Moon more than half.

There are meteorologists, but who keeps a record of the fairer sunsets? While men are recording the direction of the wind, they neglect to record the beauty of the sunset or the rainbow. The sun not yet set. The bobolink sings descending to the meadow as I go along the railroad to the pond. The seringo-bird and the common song sparrow, — and the swallows twitter. The plaintive strain of the lark, coming up from the meadow, is perfectly adapted to the hour. When I get nearer the wood, the veery is heard, and the oven-bird, or whet-saw, sounds hollowly

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from within the recesses of the wood.[1] The clouds in the west are edged with fiery red. A few robins faintly sing. The huckleberry-bird in more open fields in the woods. The thrasher? The sun is down. The night-hawks are squeaking in the somewhat dusky air and occasionally making the ripping sound; the chewinks sound; the bullfrogs begin, and the toads; also tree-toads more numerously.

Walden imparts to the body of the bather a remarkably chalky-white appearance, whiter than natural, tinged with blue, which, combined with its magnifying and distorting influence, produces a monstrous and ogre-like effect, proving, nevertheless, the purity of the water. The river water, on the other hand, imparts to the bather a yellowish tinge.[2]

There is a very low mist on the water close to the shore, a few inches high. The moon is brassy or golden now, and the air more dusky; yet I hear the pea-wai and the wood thrush, and now a whip-poor-will before I have seen a star. The walker in the woods at this hour takes note of the different veins of air through which he passes, — the fresher and cooler in the hollows, laden with the condensed fragrance of plants, as it were distilled in dews; and yet the warmer veins in a cool evening like this do not fail to be agreeable, though in them the air is comparatively lifeless or exhausted of its vitality. It circulates about from pillar to post, from wood-side to side-hill, like a dog that has lost its master, now the sun is gone.

Now it is starlight; perhaps that dark cloud in the

[1] [There is a marginal query against this sentence.]

[2] [*Walden*, p. 197; Riv. 278.]

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west has concealed the evening star before. Yet I hear a chewink, veery, and wood thrush. Nighthawks and whip-poor-wills, of course. A whip-poor-will whose nest, perchance, I am near, on the side of the Cliff, hovers in the dusky air about ten feet from me, now on this side, then on that, on quivering wings, inspecting me, showing the white on its wings. It holds itself stationary for a minute. It is the first warm night for a week, and I hear the toads by the river very numerous. First there was sundown, then starlight. Starlight! That would be a good way to mark the hour, if we were precise. That is an epoch, when the last traces of daylight have disappeared and the night (*nox*) has fairly set in. Is not the moon a mediator? She is a light-giver that does not dazzle me.

I have camped out all night on the tops of four mountains, — Wachusett, Saddle-back, Ktaadn, and Monadnock, — and I usually took a ramble over the summit at midnight by moonlight. I remember the moaning of the wind on the rocks, and that you seemed much nearer to the moon than on the plains. The light is then in harmony with the scenery. Of what use the sunlight to the mountain-summits? From the cliffs you looked off into vast depths of illumined air.

June 29. P. M. — On North River.

Leonurus Cardiaca, motherwort, a nettle-like plant by the street-side.

The *Rana halecina* (?), shad frog, is our handsomest frog, bronze striped, with brown spots, edged and intermixed with *bright* green; does not regard the fly that

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sits on him. The frogs and tortoises are striped and spotted for their concealment. The painted tortoise's throat held up above the pads, streaked with yellowish, makes it the less obvious. The mud turtle is the color of the mud, the wood frog and the hylodes of the dead leaves, the bullfrogs of the pads, the toad of the earth, etc., etc. The tree-toad of the bark.

In my experience nothing is so opposed to poetry — not crime — as business.[1] It is a negation of life.

The wind exposes the red under sides of the white lily pads. This is one of the aspects of the river now. The bud-bearing stem of this plant is a little larger, but otherwise like the leaf-stem, and coming like it directly from the long, large root. It is interesting to pull up the lily root with flowers and leaves attached and see how it sends its buds upward to the light and air to expand and flower in another element. How interesting the bud's progress from the water to the air! So many of these stems are leaf-bearing, and so many flower-bearing. Then consider how defended these plants against drought, at the bottom of the water, at most their leaves and flowers floating on its surface. How much mud and water are required to support their vitality! It is pleasant to remember those quiet Sabbath mornings by remote stagnant rivers and ponds, when pure white water-lilies, just expanded, not yet infested by insects, float on the waveless water and perfume the atmosphere. Nature never appears more serene and innocent and fragrant. A hundred white lilies, open to the sun, rest on the surface smooth as

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 456; *Misc.*, Riv. 255.]

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oil amid their pads, while devil's-needles are glancing over them. It requires some skill so to pull a lily as to get a long stem. The great yellow lily, the spatter-dock, expresses well the fertility of the river.

The *Sparganium ramosum*, or bur-reed, amid the flags now. It is associated with the reed-mace by systematists. One flower on a spike of the *Pontederia cordata* just ready to expand. Children bring you the early blueberry to sell now. It is considerably earlier on the tops of hills which have been recently cut off than on the plains or in vales. The girl that has Indian blood in her veins and picks berries for a living will find them out as soon as they turn. The yellow water ranunculus is hardly to be seen in the river now. The *Anemone Virginiana*, tall anemone, looking like a white buttercup, on Egg Rock, cannot have been long in bloom. I see the columbine lingering still.

June 30. Nature must be viewed humanly to be viewed at all; that is, her scenes must be associated with humane affections, such as are associated with one's native place, for instance. She is most significant to a lover. A lover of Nature is preëminently a lover of man. If I have no friend, what is Nature to me? She ceases to be morally significant.

7.30 P. M. — To stone bridge over Assabet. Moon nearly full; rose a little before sunset.

Cat-mint (*Nepeta cataria*) in bloom. The lower shoots of the *Andromeda calyculata* are now six inches long, the upper from two to four.[1] The fruit is on the

[1] [This sentence is queried in the margin.]

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extremities of last year's shoots in the midst of the persistent small leaves. The shrub oak acorns are as big as peas; principally cup.

The moon appears full. At first a mere white cloud. As soon as the sun sets, begins to grow brassy or obscure golden in the gross atmosphere. It is starlight about half an hour after sunset to-night; *i. e.* the first stars appear. The moon is now brighter, but not so yellowish. Ten or fifteen minutes after, the fireflies are observed, at first about the willows on the Causeway, where the evening is further advanced. Sparrows quite generally, and occasionally a robin sings. (I heard a bobolink this afternoon.) The creak of the crickets is more universal and loud, and becomes a distinct sound. The oily surface of the river in which the moon is reflected looks most attractive at this hour. I see the bright curves made by the water-bugs in the moonlight, and a muskrat crossing the river, now at 9 o'clock. Finally the last traces of day disappear, about 9.30 o'clock, and the night fairly sets in. The color of the moon is more silvery than golden, or silvery with a slight admixture of golden, a *sort of burnished cloud.*

The bass tree is budded. Haying has commenced. Some think the foliage of the trees is not so thick as last year, that the leaves have suffered from the wind.

Is not this period more than any distinguished for flowers, when roses, swamp-pinks, morning-glories, arethusas, pogonias, orchises, blue flags, epilobiums, mountain laurel, and white lilies are all in blossom at once?

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III

JULY, 1852

(ÆT. 34–35)

July 1. *Thursday.* 9.30 A. M. — To Sherman's Bridge by land and water.

A cloudy and slightly showery morning, following a thunder-shower the previous afternoon. One object to see the white lilies in blossom. The *Trifolium arvense*, or rabbit's-foot clover, is just beginning to show its color, and in the same state is the (I think) *Lysimachia stricta*, or upright loosestrife (?), by the back road. The mulleins generally now begin to show their pure yellow in roadside fields, and the white cymes of the elder are conspicuous on the edges of the copses. I perceive the meadow fragrance still. From the bridge I see a bream's nest in soft sand on the edge of deeper water, scooped out quite deep, with very sharp edges sloping both ways. Some peetweets, which probably have eggs in Conant's corn-field, make a great ado twittering and circling about the dog. The path by the wood-side is red with the effete staminiferous flowers of the white pine. It is more agreeable walking this cloudy day, with a few harmless sun-showers, than it would be in a glaring sunny day. It is pleasant to behold so much of the landscape in the shadow of the clouds, especially to look off from the top of Conantum, under shady walnut boughs, to larger shades in valleys,

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— all Nine-Acre Corner in the cool shade of a cloud. Roses are in their prime now, growing amid huckleberry bushes, ferns, and sweet-ferns, especially about some dry pond-hole; some paler, some more red. Methinks they must have bloomed in vain while only wild men roamed, yet now they only adorn these cows' pasture.

How well-behaved are cows! When they approach me reclining in the shade, from curiosity, or to receive a whisp of grass, or to share the shade, or to lick the dog held up, like a calf, — though just now they ran at him to toss him, — they do not obtrude. Their company is acceptable, for they can endure the longest pause; they have not got to be entertained. They occupy the most eligible lots in the town. I love to see some pure white about them; they suggest the more neatness.

Borrowed Brigham the wheelwright's boat at the Corner Bridge. He was quite ready to lend it, and took pains to shave down the handle of a paddle for me, conversing the while on the subject of spiritual knocking, which he asked if I had looked into,— which made him the slower. An obliging man, who understands that I am abroad viewing the works of Nature and not loafing, though he makes the pursuit a semi-religious one, as are all more serious ones to most men. All that is not sporting in the field, as hunting and fishing, is of a religious or else love-cracked character. Another hard-featured but talkative character at the bridge inquired, as I was unlocking the boat, if I knew anything that was good for the rheumatism; but I answered that I

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had heard of so many and had so little faith in any that I had forgotten them all. (On Conantum I had found *Krigia Virginica*, one of the smallest compound flowers.) The white lilies were in all their splendor, fully open, sometimes their lower petals lying flat on the surface. The largest appeared to grow in the shallower water, where some stood five or six inches out of water, and were five inches in diameter. Two which I examined had twenty-nine petals each. We pushed our boat into the midst of some shallow bays, where the water, not more than a foot deep, was covered with pads and spotted white with many hundreds of lilies which had just expanded. Yet perhaps there was not one open which had not an insect in it, and most had some hundreds of small gnats, which, however, we shook out without much trouble, instead of drowning them out, which makes the petals close.

The freshly opened lilies were a pearly white, and though the water amid the pads was quite unrippled, the passing air gave a slight oscillating, boat-like motion to and fro to the flowers, like boats held fast by their cables. Some of the lilies had a beautiful rosaceous tinge, most conspicuous in the half-opened flower, extending through the calyx to the second row of petals, on those parts of the petals between the calyx-leaves which were most exposed to the influence of the light. They were tinged with red, as they are very commonly tinged with green, as if there were a gradual transition from the stamens to the petals. It seemed to be referred to the same coloring principle which is seen in the under sides of the pads as well as the calyx-leaves.

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Yet these rosaceous ones are chiefly interesting to me for variety, and I am contented that lilies should be white and leave those higher colors to the land. I wished to breathe the atmosphere of lilies, and get the full impression which lilies are fitted to make. The form of this flower is also very perfect, the petals are so distinctly arranged at equal intervals and at all angles, from nearly a perpendicular to horizontal about the centre. And buds that were half expanded were interesting, showing the regularly notched outline of the points of the petals above the erect green calyx-leaves.

Some of these bays contained a quarter of an acre, through which we with difficulty forced our boat. First there is the low smooth green surface of the pads, — some of the kalmianas purplish, — then the higher level of the pickerel-weed just beginning to blossom, and, rising a little higher in the rear, often extensive fields of pipes (*Equisetum*), making a very level appearance. Mingled with the white lilies were the large yellow ones and the smaller and, here at least, much more common *Nuphar lutea* var. *Kalmiana*, and the floating heart also, still in blossom, and the *Brasenia peltata*, water target or shield, not yet in bloom, the petiole attached to its leaf like a boy's string to his sucking-leather. The rich violet purple of the pontederias was the more striking, as the blossoms were still rare. Nature will soon be very lavish of this blue along the riversides. It is a rich spike of blue flowers with yellowish spots. Over all these flowers hover devil's-needles in their zigzag flight. On the edge of the

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meadow I see blushing roses and cornels (probably the panicled). The woods ring with the veery this cloudy day, and I also hear the red-eye, oven-bird, Maryland yellow-throat, etc. In shallow places the river is for long distances filled, quite bridged over, with the leaves of the *Potamogeton natans*, the direction of whose stems, at least, may show which way the sluggish water is inclined. You frequently see a blue devil's-needle resting on a potamogeton flower (raceme?). You will see one red-wing in the midst of many dusky females making a great chattering over some particular part of the meadow, or else chasing a female in *zigzag* (?) *curves*. What are those taller grasses, now headed, in the meadow?

After eating our luncheon at Rice's landing, we observed that every white lily in the river was shut, — and they remained so all the afternoon, though it was no more sunny nor cloudy than the forenoon, — except some which I had plucked before noon and cast into the river, which, floating down, lodged amid the pondweed, which continued fresh but had not the power to close their petals. It would be interesting to observe how instantaneously these lilies close at noon. I only observed that, though there were myriads fully open before I ate my lunch at noon, after dinner I could not find one open anywhere for the rest of the day.

Continuing up the river, we saw the *Comarum palustre*, marsh cinquefoil, in blossom. Its leaf is more noticeable than its flower. The last incloses a strawberry-like fruit. These leaves make very rich and rare-looking beds, alternating with the pontederia and button-bush.

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It is so foreign-looking a leaf. Opposite the mouth of the Pantry Brook, or a little more west, I saw the leaves and flower-buds of the *Peltandra Virginica* (calla), — though Gray says its leaves have "shorter and more obtuse lobes" than the sagittaria.

Being made thirsty with our herring, we left our boat at the great bend and went inland to the fine cool spring near the Jenkins house. Found the *Polygonum sagittatum*, scratch-grass, just blossoming in the meadows, and an abundance of the marsh speedwell and of pogonias (adder's-tongue arethusas). The erect-scaped pyrola. The Jersey tea almost in bloom and, close by the Jenkins house in Wayland, the privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*). At the spring, where much forget-me-not now in bloom, I found ripe — of a dark red color — what I think must be Gray's *Rubus triflorus*, dwarf raspberry, though it was in *a meadow*, — a pleasant lively acid fruit. It was running over some sand cast out in digging a ditch, and I observed none so large or edible elsewhere. This is the fourth kind of berry I have found ripe this season. I must see it again. It tastes and looks like a cross between a raspberry and a blackberry. It may be this whose flowers I observed so early in Hubbard's Grove Swamp. I drank some high-colored water from a little stream in the meadow; for I love to drink the water of the meadow or the river I pass the day on, and so get eyes to see it with. The potamogeton leaves redden the stream in shoal places and retard the progress of our boat. The lowest-front ranks of the riparial plants beyond the pads are the smaller-leaved polygonum beds,

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not yet in bloom; then the pontederia, or, perchance (in some places), the marsh cinquefoil; then the meadow-grass, or pipes, or sweet flag, or button-bushes, with their lower limbs and stems covered — is it with a parasitic, moss-like plant? This might be called the Potamogeton River. The leaves now, both on land and in water, are eaten by insects and have been for some weeks. There is hardly a whole pad or potamogeton leaf. They are curiously eaten, often only half through, often in direct straight lines across the pads, as it were skippingly, or as if they had been raked with shot. Their under sides are covered with eggs of insects, as on land. Counted twenty-one fishes' nests by the shallow shore just beyond Sherman's Bridge, within less than half a rod, edge to edge, with each a bream poised in it. In some cases the fish had just cleared away the mud or frog-spittle, exposing the yellow sand or pebbles, — sixteen to twenty-four inches in diameter. My early rubus has a much-wrinkled leaf. The morning-glory which I bring home opens the next morning in a pitcher. Is it the *Hypericum ellipticum* now in blossom in the river meadows, about a foot high?[1] The *Lobelia spicata*, pale lobelia, like a snapdragon. Is it the *Erigeron annuus* (*strigosus* of Bigelow) now beginning?

Rice says the earliest flower the honey-bee is found on is that of the skunk-cabbage, before the frost is out of the meadows; also he gets his first honey from the maple and walnut stumps that have been cut in the winter, as soon as the sap begins to flow.

[1] Yes (in June).

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A young man in Sudbury told me he had heard woodchucks whistle.

July 2. Bigelow tells me that saddlers sometimes use the excrescence, the whitish fungus, on the birch to stick their awls in. Men find a use for everything at last. I saw one nailed up in his shop with an awl in it.

Last night, as I lay awake, I dreamed of the muddy and weedy river on which I had been paddling, and I seemed to derive some vigor from my day's experience, like the lilies which have their roots at the bottom.

I have plucked a white lily bud just ready to expand, and, after keeping it in water for two days,[1] have turned back its sepals with my hand and touched the lapped points of the petals, when they sprang open and rapidly expanded in my hand into a perfect blossom, with the petals as perfectly disposed at equal intervals as on their native lakes, and in this case, of course, untouched by an insect. I cut its stem short and placed it in a broad dish of water, where it sailed about under the breath of the beholder with a slight undulatory motion. The breeze of his half-suppressed admiration it was that filled its sail. It was a rare-tinted one. A kind of popular aura that may be trusted, methinks. Men will travel to the Nile to see the lotus flower, who have never seen in their glory the lotuses of their native streams.

The *Mollugo verticillata*, carpet-weed, is just beginning in the garden, and the *Polygonum convolvulus*, black bindweed. The spikes of the pale lobelia, some

[1] Till July 3d.

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blue, some white, passing insensibly from one to the other, and especially hard to distinguish in the twilight, are quite handsome now in moist ground, rising above the grass. The prunella has various tints in various lights, now blue, now lilac. As the twilight deepens into night, its color changes. It always suggests freshness and coolness, from the places where it grows. I see the downy heads of the senecio gone to seed, thistle-like but small. The gnaphaliums and this are among the earliest to present this appearance.

On my way to the Hubbard Bathing-Place, at sundown.

The blue-eyed grass shuts up before night, and methinks it does not open *very early* the next morning. The *Cornus stolonifera*, red osier, *osier rouge*, well out, and probably has been *a day or two*. I have got the order of the cornels, I think, pretty well. I see plenty of the *Peltandra Virginica* coming forward in Hubbard's meadow, and its lobes are more blunt than the sagittaria. Pogonias are very common in the meadows now. The seed-vessels of the *Iris Virginica* are formed.

At the bathing-place there is [a] hummock which was floated on to the meadow some springs ago, now densely covered with the handsome red-stemmed wild rose, a full but irregular clump, from the ground, showing no bare stems below, but a dense mass of shining leaves and small red stems above in their midst, and on every side now, in the twilight, more than usually beautiful they appear. Countless roses, partly closed, of a very deep rich color, as if the rays of the departed sun still shone through them; a more spiritual rose at

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this hour, beautifully blushing; and then the unspeakable beauty and promise of those fair swollen buds that spot the mass, which will blossom to-morrow, and the more distant promise of the handsomely formed green ones, which yet show no red, for few things are handsomer than a rosebud in any stage; these mingled with a few pure white elder blossoms and some rosaceous or pinkish meadow-sweet heads. I am confident that there can be nothing so beautiful in any cultivated garden, with all their varieties, as this wild clump. I afterwards found a similar though not so large and dense a clump of sweet-briars. Methinks their flowers are not so fragrant, and perhaps never of so deep a red. Perhaps they are more sure to open in a pitcher than the last.

It is starlight. Near woods the veery is a steady singer at this hour.[1] I notice that the lowest leaves of my potamogeton are pellucid and wavy, which, combined with their purplish tinge on the surface, makes me doubt if it be not the *pulcher*.

Do the hardhack leaves stand up and hug the stem at night, that they show their under sides so?

Nature is reported not by him who goes forth consciously as an observer, but in the fullness of life. To such a one she rushes to make her report. To the full heart she is all but a figure of speech. This is my year of observation, and I fancy that my friends are also more devoted to outward observation than ever before, as if it were an epidemic. I cross the brook by Hubbard's little bridge. Now nothing but the cool invigo-

[1] [This sentence is queried in the margin.]

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rating scent which is perceived at night in these low meadowy places where the alder and ferns grow can restore my spirits. (I made it an object to find a new *Parmelia caperata* in fruit in each walk.) At this season, methinks, we do not regard the larger features of the landscape, as in the spring, but are absorbed in details. Then, when the meadows were flooded, I looked far over them to the distant woods and the outlines of hills, which were more distinct. I should not have so much to say of extensive water or landscapes at this season. You are a little bewildered by the variety of objects. There must be a certain meagreness of details and nakedness for wide views.

(The obtuse galium shows its minute white flowers in the meadows.) If I remember, the early part of June was cool, as also the latter, though we had some hot weather, perhaps, toward the middle. The clover heads are drying up except in meadows.

9 o'clock. — The full moon rising (or full last night) is revealed first by some slight clouds above the eastern horizon looking white, — the first indication that she is about to rise, the traces of day not yet gone in the west. In the west, similar clouds, seen against a lighter sky, look dark and heavy. Now a lower cloud in the east reflects a more yellowish light. The moon, far over the round globe travelling this way, sends her light forward to yonder cloud, from which the news of her coming is reflected to us. The moon's aurora! it is without redness or fulgidness, like the dawn of philosophy, — and its noon, too. At her dawning no cocks crow. How few creatures to hail her rising! Only some

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belated travellers that may be abroad this night. What graduated information of her coming! More and more yellow glows the low cloud, with concentrating light, and now the moon's edge suddenly appears above a low bank of cloud not seen before, and she seems to come forward apace without introduction, after all; and the steadiness with which she rises with undisturbed serenity, like a queen who has learned to walk before her court, is glorious, and she soon reaches the open sea of the heavens. She seems to advance (so, perchance, flows the blood in the veins of the beholder) by graceful sallying essays, trailing her garment up the sky.

July 3. From Deep Cut over Fair Haven; back by Potter's path; 5 P. M.

The yellow lily (*Lilium Canadense*) is out, rising above the meadow-grass, sometimes one, sometimes two. Young woodchucks, sitting in their holes, allow me to come quite near. Clover is mostly dried up. The *Chimaphila umbellata*, wintergreen, must have been in blossom some time. The back side of its petals, "cream colored tinged with purple," which is turned toward the beholder, while the face is toward the earth, is the handsomest. It is a very pretty little chandelier of a flower, fit to adorn the forest floor. Its buds are nearly as handsome. (They appear long in unfolding.) *Polygonum Persicaria* just beginning.

The pickers have quite thinned the crop of early blueberries where Stow cut off winter before last. When the woods on some hillside are cut off, the *Vac-*

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cinium Pennsylvanicum springs up, or grows more luxuriantly, being exposed to light and air, and by the second year its stems are weighed to the ground with clusters of blue berries covered with bloom, and much larger than they commonly grow, also with a livelier taste than usual, as if remembering some primitive mountain-side given up to them anciently. Such places supply the villagers with the earliest berries for two or three years, or until the rising wood overgrows them and they withdraw into the bosom of Nature again. They flourish during the few years between one forest's fall and another's rise. Before you had prepared your mind or made up your mouth for berries, thinking only of crude green ones, earlier by ten days than you had expected, some child of the woods is at your door with ripe blueberries; for did n't you know that Mr. Stow cut off his wood-lot winter before last? It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and thus it happens that when the owner lays bare and deforms a hillside, and alone appears to reap any advantage from it by a crop of wood, all the villagers and the inhabitants of distant cities obtain some compensation in the crop of berries that it yields. They glean after the woodchopper, not fagots, but full baskets of blueberries. I am surprised to see how suddenly, when the sun and air and rain are let in, these bushes, which, in the shade of the forest, scarcely yielded the walker a berry, will suddenly be weighed down with fruit. Let alone your garden, cease your cultivation, and in how short a time will blueberries and huckleberries grow there!

I have not noticed a violet for some time.

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Bathed beneath Fair Haven.

How much food the muskrats have at hand! They may well be numerous. At this place the bottom in shallow water at a little distance from the shore is thickly covered with clams, half buried and on their ends, generally a little aslant. Sometimes there are a dozen or more side by side within a square foot, and I [*sic*] that, over a space twenty rods long and one wide (I know not how much farther they reach into the river), they would average three to a square foot, which would give 16,335 clams to twenty rods of shore (on one side of the river), and I suspect that there are many more. No wonder that muskrats multiply, and that the shores are covered with their shells left by the muskrats. In bathing here I can hardly step without treading on them, sometimes half a dozen at once, and often I cut my feet pretty severely on their shells. They are partly covered with mud and the short weeds at the bottom, and they are of the same color themselves; but, stooping down over them, when the roil has subsided, I can see them now (at 5.30 P. M.) with their mouths (*?*) open, — an inch long and a quarter of an inch wide, with a waving fringe about it, and another smaller opening close to it without any fringe, through both of which I see distinctly into the white interior of the fish. When I touch one, he instantly closes his shell and, if taken out, quickly spurts water like a salt-water clam. Evidently taking in their food and straining it with that waving motion of the ciliæ. There they lie, both under the pads and in the sun.

Ceanothus Americanus, New Jersey tea. The last

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month has been very breezy and on the whole a cold one, I remember; rippling leaves, showing their light under sides. *Rubus strigosus*, wild red raspberry. I can hardly find a geranium now. The common carrot by the roadside (*Daucus Carota*) is in some respects an interesting plant, for its umbel, as Bigelow says, is shaped like a bird's nest, and its large pinnatifid involucre, interlacing by its fine segments, resembles a fanciful ladies' work-basket. *Asclepias purpurascens*. I find a potamogeton to-day over the clams, which appears to correspond to the *P. pulcher*. I am not sure that it is what *I have called* the *natans*, but *this* cannot be the *natans*, for the leaves are not all long-petioled, but the lower ones waved and quite pellucid.

July 4. *Sunday*. 3 A. M. — To Conantum, to see the lilies open.

I hear an occasional crowing of cocks in distant barns, as has been their habit for how many thousand years. It was so when I was young; and it will be so when I am old. I hear the croak of a tree-toad as I am crossing the yard. I am surprised to find the dawn so far advanced. There is a yellowish segment of light in the east, paling a star and adding sensibly to the light of the waning and now declining moon. There is very little dew on the uplands. I hear a little twittering and some clear singing from the seringo and the song sparrow as I go along the back road, and now and then the note of a bullfrog from the river. The light in the east has acquired a reddish tinge near the horizon. Small wisps of cloud are already fuscous and

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dark, seen against the light, as in the west at evening. It being Sunday morning, I hear no early stirring farmer driving over a bridge. The crickets are not remarkably loud at this season. The sound of a whip-poor-will is wafted from the woods. Now, on the Corner road, the hedges are alive with twittering sparrows, a bluebird or two, etc. The daylight now balances the moonlight. How short the nights! The last traces of day have not disappeared much before 10 o'clock, or perchance 9.30, and before 3 A. M. you see them again in the east, — probably 2.30, — leaving about five hours of solid night, the sun so soon coming round again. The robins sing, but not so loud and long as in the spring. I have not been awakened by them latterly in the mornings. Is it my fault? Ah! those mornings when you are awakened in the dawn by the singing, the matins, of the birds! I hear the dumping sound of frogs now on the causeway. Some small clouds in the east are reddish fuscous. There is no fog on the river nor in the meadows. The kingbird twitters (?) on the black willows. Methinks I saw the not yet extinguished lights of one or two fireflies in the darker ruts in the grass, in Conant's meadow. The moon yields to the sun. She pales even in the presence of his *dawn*. It is chiefly the spring birds that I hear at this hour, and in each dawn the spring is thus revived. The notes of the sparrows and the bluebirds and the robin have a prominence now which they have not by day.

The light is more and more general, and some low bars begin to look bluish as well as reddish. (Elsewhere the sky wholly clear of clouds.) The dawn is at

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this stage far lighter than the brightest moonlight. I write by it. Yet the sun will not rise for some time. Those bars are reddening more above one spot. They grow purplish, or lilac rather. White and whiter grows the light in the eastern sky. (And now, descending to the Cliff by the riverside, I cannot see the low horizon and its phenomena.) I love to go through these old apple orchards so irregularly set out. Sometimes two trees standing close together. The rows of grafted fruit will never tempt me to wander amid them like these. A bittern leaves the shore at my approach. I suppose it is he whose excrement has whitened the rocks, as if a mason had spilled his whitewash. A nighthawk squeaks and booms, before sunrise. The insects shaped like shad-flies (some which I see are larger and yellowish) begin to leave their cases (and selves?) on the stems of the grasses and the rushes in the water. I find them so weak they can hardly hold on. I hear the blackbird's *conqueree*, and the kingfisher darts away with his alarum and outstretched neck. Every lily is shut.

Sunrise. I see it gilding the top of the hill behind me, but the sun itself is concealed by the hills and woods on the east shore. A very slight fog begins to rise now in one place on the river. There is something serenely glorious and memorable to me in the sight of the first cool sunlight now gilding the eastern extremity of the bushy island in Fair Haven, that wild lake. The subdued light and the repose remind me of Hades. In such sunlight there is no fever. It is such an innocent pale yellow as the spring flowers. It is the pollen of the sun, fertilizing plants. The color of the earliest

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spring flowers is as cool and innocent as the first rays of the sun in the morning falling on woods and hills. The fog not only rises upward (about two feet), but at once there is a motion from the sun over the surface. What means this endless motion of water-bugs collected in little groups on the surface and ceaselessly circling about their centre, as if they were a family hatched from the eggs on the under side of a pad? Is not this motion intended partly to balk the fishes? Methinks they did not begin to move till sunrise. Where were they? And now I see an army of skaters advancing in loose array, — of chasseurs or scouts, as Indian allies are drawn in old books.

Now the rays of the sun have reached my seat, a few feet above the water; flies begin to buzz, mosquitoes to be less troublesome. A hummingbird hums by over the pads up the river, as if looking, like myself, to see if lilies have blossomed. The birds begin to sing generally, and, if not loudest, at least most noticeably on account of the quietness of the hour, just before — a few minutes before — sunrise. They do not sing so incessantly and earnestly, as a regular thing, half an hour later.

Carefully looking both up and down the river, I could perceive that the lilies began to open about fifteen minutes after the sun from over the opposite bank fell on them, which was perhaps three quarters of an hour after sunrise (which is about 4.30), and one was fully expanded about twenty minutes later. When I returned over the bridge about 6.15, there were perhaps a dozen open ones in sight. It was very difficult to find one

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not injured by insects. Even the buds which were just about to expand were frequently bored quite through, and the water had rotted them. You must be on hand early to anticipate insects.

One thimble-berry which will be quite ripe by to-morrow. Indigo almost expanded. I perceive the meadow fragrance on the causeway. Bobolinks still.

I bring home a dozen *perfect* lily buds, — all I can find within many rods, — which have never yet opened; I prepare a large pan of water; I cut their stems quite short; I turn back their calyx-leaves with my fingers, so that they may float upright; I touch the points of their petals, and breathe or blow on them, and toss them in. They spring open rapidly, or gradually expand in the course of an hour, — all but one or two.

At 12.30 P. M., I perceive that the lilies in the river have begun to shut up. The water has gone down so much that I can stand on the shore and pluck as many as I want, and they are the fairest ones, concealed by the pickerel-weed, often the whole plant high and dry. I go again to the river at 2.30 P. M., and every lily is shut.

I will here tell the history of my rosaceous lilies plucked the 1st of July. They were buds at the bottom of a pitcher of water all the 2d, having been kept in my hat part of the day before. On the morning of the 3d I assisted their opening, and put them in water, as I have described; but they did not shut up at noon, like those in the river, but at dark, their petals, at least, quite tight and close. They all opened again in the course of the forenoon of the 4th, but had not shut up

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at 10 o'clock P. M., though I found them shut in the morning of the 5th. May it be that they can bear only a certain amount of light, and these, being in the shade, remained open longer? (I think not, for they shut up in the river that quite cloudy day, July 1st.) Or is their vitality too little to permit [them] to perform their regular functions?

Can that meadow fragrance come from the purple summits of the eupatorium?

I looked down on the river behind Dodd's at 2.30 P. M., a slate-colored stream with a scarcely perceptible current, with a male and female shore; the former, more abrupt, of button-bushes and willows, the other, flat, of grass and pickerel-weed alone. Beyond the former, the water being deep, extends a border or fringe of green and purplish pads lying perfectly flat on the surface, but on the latter side the pads extend a half a rood or a rod beyond the pickerel-weed, — shining pads reflecting the light, dotted with white or yellow lilies. This sort of ruff does the river wear, and so the land is graduated off to water. A tender place in nature, an exposed vein, and nature making a feint to bridge it quite over with a paddy film, with red-winged blackbirds liquidly warbling and whistling on the willows, and kingbirds on the elms and oaks; these pads, if there is any wind, rippling with the water and helping to smooth and allay it. It looks tender and exposed, as if it were naturally subterranean, and now, with these shields of pads, held scale-like by long threads from the bottom, she makes a feint to bridge it. So floats the Musketaquid over its segment of the sphere.

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Methinks there is not even a lily, white or yellow, in Walden.

I see perfectly formed pouts by the shore of the river, one inch long. The great spatterdock lily is a rich yellow at a little distance, and, seen lying on its great pads, it is an indispensable evidence of the fertility of the river. The gratiola begins to yellow the mud by the riverside. The *Lysimachia lanceolata* var. *hybrida* is out, in the meadows. The *Rosa nitida* (?) appears to be now out of bloom.

July 5. I know a man who never speaks of the sexual relation but jestingly, though it is a subject to be approached only with reverence and affection. What can be the character of that man's love? It is ever the subject of a stale jest, though his health or his dinner can be seriously considered. The glory of the world is seen only by a chaste mind. To whomsoever this fact is not an awful but beautiful mystery, there are no flowers in nature.

White lilies continue to open in the house in the morning and shut in the night for five or six days, until their stamens have shed their pollen and they turn rusty and begin to decay, and the beauty of the flower is gone, and its vitality, so that it no longer expands with the light.

How perfect an invention is glass! There is a fitness in glass windows which reflect the sun morning and evening, windows, the doorways of light, thus reflecting the rays of that luminary with a splendor only second

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to itself. This invention one would say was anticipated in the arrangement of things. The sun rises with a salute and leaves the world with a farewell to our windows. To have, instead of opaque shutters or dull horn or paper, a material like solidified air, which reflects the sun thus brightly! It is inseparable from our civilization and enlightenment. It is encouraging that this intelligence and brilliancy or splendor should belong to the dwellings of men, and not to the cliffs and micaceous rocks and lakes exclusively.

P. M. — To Second Division Brook.

The *Typha latifolia*, or reed-mace, sheds an abundance of sulphur-like pollen into the hand now. Its tall and handsome swords are seen waving above the bushes in low grounds now. What I suppose the *Vaccinium fuscatum*, or black blueberry, is now ripe here and there, quite small. Heard the blating or lowing of a calf. Sat in the shade of the locusts in front of J. Hosmer's cottage and heard a locust z-ing on them, but could not find him. This cottage and the landscape, seen through the frame made by the "Railroad Crossing" sign, as you approach it along the winding bushy road, is a pleasing sight. It is picturesque.

There is a meadow on the Assabet just above Derby's Bridge, — it may contain an acre, — bounded on one side by the river, on the other by alders and a hill, completely covered with small hummocks which have lodged on it in the winter, covering it like the mounds in a graveyard at pretty regular intervals. Their edges are rounded like [the] latter, and they and the paths

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between are covered with a firm, short greensward, with here and there hardhacks springing out of them, so that they make excellent seats, especially in the shade of an elm that grows there. They are completely united with the meadow, forming little oblong hillocks from one to ten feet long, flat as a mole to the sward. I am inclined to call it the elfin burial-ground, or perchance it might be called the Indian burial-ground. It is a remarkably firm-swarded meadow, and convenient to walk on. And these hummocks have an important effect in elevating it. It suggests at once a burial-ground of the aborigines, where perchance lie the earthly remains of the rude forefathers of the race. I love to ponder the natural history thus written on the banks of the stream, for every higher freshet and intenser frost is recorded by it. The stream keeps a faithful and a true journal of every event in its experience, whatever race may settle on its banks; and it purls past this natural graveyard with a storied murmur, and no doubt it could find endless employment for an old mortality in renewing its epitaphs.

The progress of the season is indescribable. It is growing warm again, but the warmth is different from that we have had. We lie in the shade of locust trees. Haymakers go by in a hay-rigging. I am reminded of berrying. I scent the sweet-fern and the dead or dry pine leaves. Cherry-birds alight on a neighboring tree. The warmth is something more normal and steady, ripening fruits. *Campanula aparinoides*, slender bellflower. The *Cicuta maculata*, American hemlock. It begins to be such weather as when people go a-huckle-

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berrying. Nature offers fruits now as well as flowers. We have become accustomed to the summer. It has acquired a certain eternity. The earth is dry. Perhaps the sound of the locust expresses the season as well as anything. The farmers say the abundance of the grass depends on wet in June. I might make a separate season of those days when the locust is heard. That is our torrid zone. This dryness and heat are necessary for the maturing of fruits.

How cheering it is to behold a full spring bursting forth directly from the earth, like this of Tarbell's, from clean gravel, copiously, in a thin sheet; for it descends at once, where you see no opening, cool from the caverns of the earth, and making a considerable stream. Such springs, in the sale of lands, are not valued for as much as they are worth. I lie almost flat, resting my hands on what offers, to drink at this water where it bubbles, at the very udders of Nature, for man is never weaned from her breast while this life lasts. How many times in a single walk does he stoop for a draught!

We are favored in having two rivers, flowing into one, whose banks afford different kinds of scenery, the streams being of different characters; one a dark, muddy, dead stream, full of animal and vegetable life, with broad meadows and black dwarf willows and weeds, the other *comparatively* pebbly and swift, with more abrupt banks and narrower meadows. To the latter I go to see the ripple, and the varied bottom with its stones and sands and shadows; to the former for the influence of its dark water resting on invisible mud,

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and for its reflections. It is a factory of soil, depositing sediment.

How many virtues have cattle in the fields! They do not make a noise at your approach, like dogs; they rarely low, but are quiet as nature, — merely look up at you. In the Ministerial Swamp there is a great deal of the naked viburnum rising above the dwarf andromeda. The calopogon, or grass-pink, now fully open, is remarkably handsome in the grass in low grounds, by contrast — its four or five *open* purple flowers — with the surrounding green. It makes a much greater show than the pogonia. It is of the same character with that and the arethusa, with a slight fragrance, methinks. It is very much indebted to its situation, no doubt, in low ground, where it contrasts with the dark-green grass. All color, with only a grass-like leaf below; flowers eminently. If it grew on dry and barren hilltops, or in woods above the dead leaves, it would lose half its attractions. Buttercups have now almost disappeared, as well as clover. Some of the earliest roses are ceasing, but others remain. I see many devil's-needles zigzagging along the Second Division Brook, some green, some blue, both with black and perhaps velvety wings. They are confined to the brook. How lavishly they are painted! How cheap was the paint! How free the fancy of their creator! I caught a handful of small water-bugs, fifteen or twenty, about as large as apple seeds. Some country people call them apple seeds, it is said, from their scent. I perceived a strong scent, but I am not sure it was like apples. I should rather think they were so called from their shape.

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Some birds are poets and sing all summer. They are the true singers. Any man can write verses during the love season. I am reminded of this while we rest in the shade on the Major Heywood road and listen to a wood thrush, now just before sunset. We are most interested in those birds who sing for the love of the music and not of their mates; who meditate their strains, and *amuse* themselves with singing; the birds, the strains, of deeper sentiment; not bobolinks, that lose their plumage, their bright colors, and their song so early.

The robin, the red-eye, the veery, the wood thrush, etc., etc.

The wood thrush's is no opera music; it is not so much the composition as the strain, the tone, — cool bars of melody from the atmosphere of everlasting morning or evening. It is the quality of the song, not the sequence. In the peawai's note there is some sultriness, but in the thrush's, though heard at noon, there is the liquid coolness of things that are just drawn from the bottom of springs. The thrush alone declares the immortal wealth and vigor that is in the forest. Here is a bird in whose strain the story is told, though Nature waited for the science of æsthetics to discover it to man. Whenever a man hears it, he is young, and Nature is in her spring. Wherever he hears it, it is a new world and a free country, and the gates of heaven are not shut against him. Most other birds sing from the level of my ordinary cheerful hours — a carol; but this bird never fails to speak to me out of an ether purer than that I breathe, of immortal beauty

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and vigor. He deepens the significance of all things seen in the light of his strain. He sings to make men take higher and truer views of things. He sings to amend their institutions; to relieve the slave on the plantation and the prisoner in his dungeon, the slave in the house of luxury and the prisoner of his own low thoughts.

How fitting to have every day in a vase of water on your table the wild-flowers of the season which are just blossoming! Can any house [be] said to be furnished without them? Shall we be so forward to pluck the fruits of Nature and neglect her flowers? These are surely her finest influences. So may the season suggest the fine thoughts it is fitted to suggest. Shall we say, "A penny for your thoughts," before we have looked into the face of Nature? Let me know what picture she is painting, what poetry she is writing, what ode composing, now.

I hear my hooting owl now just before sunset. You can fancy it the most melancholy sound in Nature, as if Nature meant by this to stereotype and make permanent in her quire the dying moans of a human being, made more awful by a certain gurgling melodiousness. It reminds of ghouls and idiots and insane howlings. One answers from far woods in a strain made really sweet by distance. Some poor weak relic of mortality who has left hope behind, and howls like an animal, yet with human sobs, on entering the dark valley. I find myself beginning with the letters *gl* when I try to imitate it. Yet for the most part it is a sweet and melodious strain to me.[1]

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 138, 139; Riv. 196.]

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Some fields are quite yellow with johnswort now, — a pleasing motley hue, which looks autumnal. What is that small chickweed-like plant on Clamshell Hill, now out of bloom?

The sun has set. We are in Dennis's field. The dew is falling fast. Some fine clouds, which have just escaped being condensed in dew, hang on the skirts of day and make the attraction in our western sky, — that part of day's gross atmosphere which has escaped the clutches of the night and is not enough condensed to fall to earth, — soon to be gilded by his parting rays. They are remarkably finely divided clouds, a very fine mackerel sky, or, rather, as if one had sprinkled that part of the sky with a brush, the outline of the whole being that of several large sprigs of fan coral. C., as usual, calls it a Mediterranean sky. They grow darker and darker, and now are reddened, while dark-blue bars of clouds of wholly different character lie along the northwest horizon.

The *Asclepias Cornuti* (*Syriaca*) and the *A. incarnata* (*pulchra*) (this hardly out). Considerable fog to-night.

July 6. 2.30 P. M. — To Beck Stow's, thence to Saw Mill Brook, and return by Walden.

Now for the shade of oaks in pastures. The witnesses attending court sit on the benches in the shade of the great elm. The cattle gather under the trees. The pewai is heard now in the heat of the day, and the red-eye (?). The pure white cymes (?) of the elder are very conspicuous now along the edges of meadows,

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contrasting with the green above and around. Yarrow is another of those flat-cymed flowers, now common. Here are holes dug by cattle in the dry fields (the Great Fields), like the buffalo wallows. In the swamp I find no blueberries ripe. But few *old* leaves remain on the dwarf andromeda. Woodchucks are remarkably numerous this year. *Cirsium arvense,* Canada thistle, just begun.

From the lane in front of Hawthorne's I see dense beds of tufted vetch (*Vicia cracca*), for some time taking the place of the grass in the low grounds, blue inclining in spots to lilac like the lupines. This, too, was one of the flowers that Proserpine was gathering, and yellow lilies, too. It is affecting to see such an abundance of blueness in the grass. It affects the eyes, this celestial color. I see it afar (from Hosmer's) in masses on the hillsides near the meadow. So much blue, laid on with so heavy a hand!

In selecting a site in the country, let a lane near your house, grass-grown, cross a sizable brook where is a watering-place. I see a pickerel in the brook showing his whitish greedy upper lips projecting over the lower. How well concealed he is! He is generally of the color of the muddy bottom or the decayed leaves and wood that compose it, and the longitudinal white stripe on his back and the transverse ones on his sides are the color of the yellowish sand here and there exposed. He heads up-stream and keeps his body perfectly motionless, however rapid the current, chiefly by the motion of his narrow pectoral fins, though also by the waving of his other fins and tail as much as necessary, which a

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frog might mistake for that of weeds. Thus, concealed by his color and stillness, like a stake, he lies in wait [for] frogs or minnows. Now a frog leaps in, and he darts forward three or four feet.

Pastinaca sativa, parsnip. How wholesome and edible smells its sweet root! What is that succulent plant near Tuttle's? *Agrimonia eupatoria* with a rather handsome spike of yellow flowers. Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) just begins.

A quail. I associate its whistle with breezy weather.

Hosmer is haying, but inclined to talk as usual. I blowed on his horn at supper-time. I asked if I should do any harm if I sounded it. He said no, but I called Mrs. Hosmer back, who was on her way to the village, though I blowed it but poorly. I was surprised to find how much skill and breath it took, depending on the size of the throat. Let blow a horn, says Robin, that good fellowship may us know. Where could a man go to practice on the horn, unless he went round to the farmer's at meal-time?

I am disappointed that Hosmer, the most intelligent farmer in Concord, and perchance in Middlesex, who admits that he has property enough for his use without accumulating more, and talks of leaving off hard work, letting his farm, and spending the rest of his days easier and better, cannot yet think of any method of employing himself but in work with his hands; only he would have a little less of it. Much as he is inclined to speculation in conversation — giving up any work to it for the time — and long-headed as he is, he talks of working for a neighbor for a day now and then and taking

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his dollar. He "would not like to spend his time sitting on the mill-dam." He has not even planned an essentially better life.

Lysimachia stricta, upright loosestrife, now well out, by Hosmer's Pond and elsewhere, a rather handsome flower or cylindrical raceme of flowers. The *Castanea vesca*, with cream-colored flowers, seen from far, and the small green burs just forming. This is before the bass, methinks. It is covered with insects, now that tree flowers are scarce, — rose-bugs, a kind of locust, and I see a milk-white spider with two reddish spots; — a rather disagreeable buttery scent. I saw the other day a spider on a dwarf primrose, yellow, like the flower, and shaped like a flower. The red lily (*Lilium Philadelphicum*). This has very open petals of a dark vermilion color, speckled within, and grows in rather dry places, by wood-paths, etc., and is very interesting and handsome.

Sometimes the swampy vigor in such doses proves rank poison to the sensitively bred man! — as where dogwood grows. How far he has departed from the rude vigor of Nature, that he cannot assimilate and transmute her elements! The morning air may make a debauchee sick; no herb is friendly to him; all, at last, are poisons, and yet none are medicines to him, and so he dies; the air kills him.

Saw five drooping lily buds — yellow lilies, I suppose — on one stem. I notice the handsome stages of leaves, whorl-like or spiral, of the ground pine (*Lycopodium dendroideum*), whose spike is budded now. The *Galium trifidum*, rough. Also the *Galium triflorum*, flat on the

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ground, raying out two feet each way with broad and pointed leaves.

Returning through Britton's peach-field, I see numerous caterpillars' nests on the shrub oaks, made of clustered leaves, as big as your fist. They are three quarters of an inch long within. Soon to strip the bushes.

The *Erigeron strigosus* (*integrifolius* of Bigelow) is very common now in the fields, the flowers on the branches generally higher than the middle ones, like small white asters. At Saw Mill Brook, *Circæa alpina*, enchanter's-nightshade, moist shady places, with thin tender leaves *somewhat* like the touch-me-not's, — a sounding name for so inconspicuous a flower. The *Rubus hispidus*, or running swamp blackberry, was just in bloom when I gathered my early red ones, and is still generally in bloom; also the *R. Canadensis* is still often in bloom.

The early blueberries ripen first on the hills, before those who confine themselves to the lowlands are aware of it. When the old folks find only one turned here and there, children, who are best acquainted with the localities of berries, bring pailfuls to sell at their doors. For birds' nests and berries, give me a child's eyes. But berries must be eaten on the hills, and then how far from the surfeiting luxury of an alderman's dinner!

I heard a solitary duck on Goose Pond making a doleful cry, though its ordinary one, just before sundown, as if caught in a trap or by a fox, and, creeping silently through the bushes, I saw it — probably a

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wood duck — sailing rapidly away; but it still repeated its cry, as if calling for a mate.

When the hen hatches ducks they do not mind her clucking. They lead the hen. Chickens and ducks are well set on the earth. What great legs they have! This part is early developed. A perfect Antæus is a young duck in this respect, deriving a steady stream of health and strength, for he rarely gets off it, ready either for land or water. Nature is not on her last legs yet. A chick's stout legs! If they were a little larger they would injure the globe's tender organization with their scratching. Then, for digestion, consider their crops and what they put into them in the course of a day! Consider how well fitted to endure the fatigue of a day's excursion. A young chick will run all day in pursuit of grasshoppers and occasionally vary its exercise by scratching, go to bed at night with protuberant crop, and get up early in the morning ready for a new start.

We have all kinds of walks in the woods, if we follow the paths, — some quite embowered in old forests and carpeted with slippery pine leaves, some covered with fine grass, rarely used between glossy shrub oaks and locusts, winding away.

July 7. 4 A. M. — The first[1] really foggy morning. Yet before I rise I hear the song of birds from out it, like the bursting of its bubbles with music, the bead on liquids just uncorked. Their song gilds thus the frostwork of the morning. As if the fog were a great sweet froth

[1] [This is queried in pencil.]

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on the surface of land and water, whose fixed air escaped, whose bubbles burst with music. The sound of its evaporation, the fixed air of the morning just brought from the cellars of the night escaping. The morning twittering of birds in perfect harmony with it. I came near awaking this morning. I am older than last year; the mornings are further between; the days are fewer. Any excess — to have drunk too much water, even, the day before — is fatal to the morning's clarity, but in health the sound of a cow-bell is celestial music. Oh, might I always wake to thought and poetry — regenerated! Can [it] be called a morning, if our senses are not clarified so that we perceive more clearly, if we do not rise with elastic vigor? How wholesome these fogs which some fear! They are cool, medicated vapor baths, mingled by Nature, which bring to our senses all the medical properties of the meadows. The touchstones of health. Sleep with all your windows open, and let the mist embrace you.

To the Cliffs.

The fog condenses into fountains and streams of music, as into the strain of the bobolink which I hear, and runs off so. The music of the birds is the tinkling of the rills that flow from it. I cannot see twenty rods. The trees look darker through it, and their outlines more distinct, apparently because of the whiteness of the fog and the less light that comes through the trees. There is everywhere dew on the cobwebs, little gossamer veils or scarfs as big as your hand, dropped from fairy shoulders that danced on the grass the past night.

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Even where the grass was cut yesterday and is now cocked up, these dewy webs are as thick as anywhere, promising a fair day. There is no sunrise.

Hayden says his old cow "split her bones" in giving birth to a calf, and lies now helpless and incurable in the pasture, where he feeds her. Thus Nature rends the old husks, careful only for the fruit. The old, no doubt, have their satisfactions as well as the young.

The cobwebs on the dead twigs in sprout-lands covered with fog or dew. Their geometry is very distinct, and I see where birds have flown through them. I noticed that the fog last night, just after sundown, was like a fine smoke in valleys between the woods. The, to me, beautiful rose-colored spikes of the hardhack (*Spiræa tomentosa*). One is out. I think it was this thin vapor that produced a kind of mirage when I looked over the meadow from the railroad last night toward Trillium Wood, giving to the level meadow a certain liquid, sea-like look. Now the heads of herd's-grass, seen through the dispersing fog, look like an ocean of grass. Yesterday I noticed some goldenrods by the Walden road whose sheafy tops were yellowish. I appear to have brought home last night the *Pyrola rotundifolia* and *elliptica*, or shin-leaf, and perhaps *chlorantha* (?), now quite abundant.

6 P. M. — To Hubbard's Bathing-Place.

Pogonias are still abundant in the meadows, but arethusas I have not lately seen. The drooping heads of rattlesnake grass look autumnal. The blue-eyed

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grass shuts up before sunset. The blossom of the cranberry looks singularly dry and shaving-like, considering its locality. The very handsome "pink purple" flowers of the *Calopogon* (!) *pulchellus* enrich the grass all around the edge of Hubbard's blueberry swamp, and are now in their prime. The *Arethusa bulbosa*, "crystalline purple;" *Pogonia ophioglossoides*, snake-mouthed arethusa, "pale purple;" and the *Calopogon pulchellus*, grass pink, "pink purple," make one family in my mind, — next to the purple orchis, or with it, — being flowers *par excellence*, all flower, all color, with inconspicuous leaves, naked flowers, and difficult — at least the calopogon — to preserve. But they are flowers, excepting the first, at least, without a name. Pogonia! Calopogon!! They would blush still deeper if they knew what names man had given them. The first and the last interest me most, for the pogonia has a strong snaky odor. The first may perhaps retain its name arethusa, from the places in which it grows, and the other two deserve the names of nymphs, perhaps of the class called Naiades. How would the Naiad Ægle do for one? The calopogon, like so many flowers, looks lilac-colored in the twilight. (My hummock of roses is still full of flowers and buds.) To be sure, in a perfect flower there will be proportion between the flowers and leaves, but these are fair and delicate, nymph-like.

The flowers of the *Lysimachia lanceolata* var. *hybrida*, loosestrife, are of a particularly faint or saffron or spring (?) yellow. *Plantago major*, *Lepidium Virginicum*, pepper-grass, an inconspicuous weed, with seed-vessels

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somewhat like shepherd's-purse. I find in Hubbard's meadow what may be the 17th, 18th, or 19th aster of Gray. *Vide* Dictionary.

When the yellow lily flowers in the meadows, and the red in dry lands and by wood-paths, then, methinks, the flowering season has reached its height. They surprise me as perhaps no more can. Now I am prepared for anything.

July 8. P. M. — Down river in boat to the Holt.

The small globose white flower in muddy places by river and elsewhere. The bass on Egg Rock is just ready to expand. It is perhaps the warmest day yet.

We held on to the abutments under the red bridge to cool ourselves in the shade. No better place in hot weather, the river rippling away beneath you and the air rippling through beneath the abutments, if only in sympathy with the river, while the planks afford a shade, and you hear all the travel and the travellers' talk without being seen or suspected. The bullfrog it is, methinks, that makes the dumping sound. There is generally a current of air circulating over water, always, methinks, if the water runs swiftly, as if it put the air in motion. There is quite a breeze here this sultry day. Commend me to the sub-pontean, the under-bridge, life.

I am inclined to think bathing almost one of the necessaries of life, but it is surprising how indifferent some are to it. What a coarse, foul, busy life we lead, compared even with the South-Sea-Islanders, in some re-

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spects. Truant boys steal away to bathe, but the farmers, who most need it, rarely dip their bodies into the streams or ponds. M—— was telling me last night that he had thought of bathing when he had done his hoeing, — of taking some soap and going down to Walden and giving himself a good scrubbing, — but something had occurred to prevent it, and now he will go unwashed to the harvesting, aye, even till the next hoeing is over. Better the faith and practice of the Hindoos who worship the sacred Ganges. We have not faith enough in the Musketaquid to wash in it, even after hoeing. Men stay on shore, keep themselves dry, and drink rum. Pray what were rivers made for? One farmer, who came to bathe in Walden one Sunday while I lived there, told me it was the first bath he had had for fifteen years. Now what kind of religion could his be? Or was it any better than a Hindoo's?

M—— said that Abel Heywood told him he had been down to the Great Meadows (river meadows) to look at the grass, and that there was n't a-going to be much of a crop; in some places there was n't any grass at all. The great freshet in the spring did n't do it any good.

Under the *Salix nigra* var. *falcata*, near that handsomest one, which now is full of scythe-shaped leaves, the larger six inches long by seven eighths wide, with remarkably broad lunar leafy appendages or stipules at their base, I found a remarkable moth lying flat on the still water as if asleep (they appear to sleep during the day), as large as the smaller birds. Five and a half inches in alar extent and about three inches long, some-

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thing like the smaller figure in one position of the wings (with a remarkably narrow lunar-cut tail), of a sea-green color, with four conspicuous spots whitish within, then a red line, then yellowish border below or toward the tail, but brown, brown orange, and black above, toward head; a very robust body, covered with a kind of downy plumage, an inch and a quarter long by five eighths thick. The sight affected me as tropical, and I suppose it is the northern verge of some species. It suggests into what productions Nature would run if all the year were a July. By night it is active, for, though I thought it dying at first, it made a great noise in its prison, a cigar-box, at night. When the day returns, it apparently drops wherever it may be, even into the water, and dozes till evening again. Is it called the emperor moth?[1]

Yesterday I observed the arrow-wood at Saw Mill Brook, remarkably tall, straight, and slender. It is quite likely the Indians made their arrows of it, for it makes just such shoots as I used to select for my own arrows. It appears to owe its straightness partly to its rapid growth, already two feet from the extremities chiefly. The pontederia begins to make a show now. The black willow has branches horizontal or curving downward to the water first, branching at once at the ground. The *Sium latifolium*, water parsnip, — except that the calyx-leaves *are* minute and the fruit *ribbed*, — close to the edge of the river.

[1] [The luna moth.]

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July 9. *Friday.* 4 A. M. — To Cliffs.

No dew; no dewy cobwebs. The sky looks mist-like, not clear blue. An aurora fading into a general saffron color. At length the redness travels over, partly from east to west, before sunrise, and there is little color in the east. The birds all unite to make the morning quire; sing rather faintly, not prolonging their strains. The crickets appear to have received a reinforcement during the sultry night. There is no name for the evening red corresponding to aurora. It is the blushing foam about the prow of the sun's boat, and at eve the same in its wake. I do not often hear the bluebird now except at dawn. Methinks we have had no clear winter skies — no skies the color of a robin's egg, and pure amber around — for some months. These blueberries on Fair Haven have a very innocent, ambrosial taste, as if made of the ether itself, as they plainly are colored with it. I hear the chickadee's two wiry notes. The jay's note, resounding along a raw wood-side, suggests a singular wildness. I hear many scarlet tanagers, the first I have seen this season, which some might mistake for a red-eye. A hoarse, rough strain, comparatively, but more easily caught owing to its simplicity and sameness; something like *heer chip-er-way-heer chory chay.* A bobolink. How handsome the leaves of the shrub oak, so clear and unspotted a green, so firm and enduring, like fame; glossy, uninjured by the wind, meed for mighty conquerors; and also lighter on the under side, which contrast is important. The wood thrush sings on a dead tree-top. There is an insect in the froth on the *Vaccinium vacillans.* I see the cistus

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still. The amelanchier's is a handsome berry, purplish when ripe, though handsomest when red, and inkish [?] next the stem. It must be the cuckoo that makes that half-throttled sound at night, for I saw one while he made it this morning, as he flew from an apple tree when I disturbed him. Those white water-lilies, what boats! I toss one into the pan half unfolded, and it floats upright like a boat. It is beautiful when half open and also when fully expanded. Methinks I have found the *Asclepias obtusifolia*, which has long horns and is quite fragrant.

Morton, in his "Crania Americana," says, referring to Wilkinson as his authority, that "vessels of porcelain of Chinese manufacture have of late been repeatedly found in the catacombs of Thebes, in Egypt," some as old as the Pharaonic period, and the inscriptions on them "have been read with ease by Chinese scholars, and in three instances record the following legend: The flower opens, and lo! another year." There is something sublime in the fact that some of the oldest written sentences should thus celebrate the coming in of spring. How many times have the flowers opened and a new year begun! Hardly a more cheering sentence could have come down to us. How old is spring, a phenomenon still so fresh! Do we perceive any decay in Nature? How much evidence is contained in this short and simple sentence respecting the former inhabitants of this globe! It is a sentence to be inscribed on vessels of porcelain. Suggesting that so many years had gone before. An observation as fit then as now.

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3 P. M. —To Clematis Brook.

The heat to-day (as yesterday) is furnace-like. It produces a thickness almost amounting to vapor in the near horizon. The railroad men cannot work in the Deep Cut, but have come out on to the causeway, where there is a circulation of air. They tell with a shudder of the heat reflected from the rails. Yet a breezy wind, as it were born of the heat, rustles all leaves. Those drifting piles of clouds in the north, assuming interesting forms, of unmeasured rocky mountains or unfathomed precipices, light-colored and even downy above, but with watery bases, portend a thundershower before night. Well, I can take shelter in some haven or under a bridge. It shall not spoil my afternoon. I have scarcely heard one strain from the telegraph harp this season. Its string is rusted and slackened, relaxed, and now no more it encourages the walker. I miss it much. So is it with all sublunary things. Every poet's lyre loses its tension. It cannot bear the alternate contraction and expansion of the seasons. The *Lactuca elongata*, four or five feet high, with its small pale-yellow flowers now closed. How intense and suffocating the heat under some sunny wood-sides where no breeze circulates! I go by Well Meadow Head. The tephrosia, which still lingers, is remarkable, perhaps, for the contrast of its light or clear purple with its cream-colored petals. The *Veratrum viride* in the swamp is already turned yellow and decaying and half prostrate. Its fall is already come. I observe that the fever-bush here, as on Conantum, died down last winter. The red lily, with its torrid

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color and sun-freckled spots, dispensing, too, with the outer garment of a calyx, its petals so open and wide apart that you can see through it in every direction, tells of hot weather. It is a handsome bell shape, so upright, and the *flower* prevails over every other part. It belongs not to spring. It grows in the path by the town bound. It is refreshing to see the surface of Fair Haven rippled with wind. The waves break here quite as on the seashore and with the like effects. This little brook makes great sands comparatively at its mouth, which the waves of the pond wash up and break upon like a sea. The *Ludwigia palustris*, water purslane, on mud in bottom of dry ditches.

Bathing is an undescribed luxury. To feel the wind blow on your body, the water flow on you and lave you, is a rare physical enjoyment this hot day. The water is remarkably warm here, especially in the shallows, — warm to the hand, like that which has stood long in a kettle over a fire. The pond water being so warm made the water of the brook feel very cold; and this kept close on the bottom of the pond for a good many rods about the mouth of the brook, as I could feel with my feet; and when I thrust my arm down where it was only two feet deep, my arm was in the warm water of the pond, but my hand in the cold water of the brook. The clams are, if possible, more numerous here, though perhaps smaller than at the shore under the Cliffs. I could collect many bushels of them.

The sandy shore just beyond this is quite yellow with the *Utricularia cornuta*, the small ranunculus, and

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the gratiola, all growing together. They make quite a show. A black snake on the sand retreats not into the bushes, but into the pond, amid the pontederia. The *Rhus glabra* is out. At Clematis Pond, the small arrowhead in the mud is still bleeding where cows have cropped. In some places the mud is covered with the *Ilysanthes gratioloides*, false pimpernel. I think it is this, the *flower* shaped somewhat like a skull-cap (*Lindernia* of Bigelow). The bottom of this pond, now for the most part exposed, of dark virgin mud, soft and moist, is an invigorating sight. It is alive with hundreds of small bullfrogs (?) at my approach, which go skipping into the water. Perhaps they were outside for coolness. It is also recently tracked by minks or muskrats in all directions, and by birds. (I should have said that the sand washed down by the brook at Pleasant Meadow covered the muddy bottom of the pond, but where the sandy covering was thin I slumped through it into the mud. I saw there some golden or brownish-golden winged devil's-needles, and was struck by the manner in which they held to the tops of the rushes when they alighted, — just on one side. You would perhaps confound them with the spike (?) of flowers.)

The *Corylus rostrata*, beaked hazel, with green fruit, by Clematis Brook. The milkweeds, *syriaca* chiefly, are now in full flower by the ditch just beyond and fill the air with a strong scent, — five or six feet high. The *Asclepias obtusifolia* has a handsome waved or curled leaf and, methinks, more fragrant flowers. By this ditch also grows the *Sisym-*

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brium amphibium, amphibious cress, of Bigelow (apparently *Nasturtium palustre* of Gray, though the pods are tipped with a conspicuous style and are not to be compared for length with the pedicels). It has the aspect and the taste of mustard. A rather high plant in water. That large galium. Can it be the cardinal-flower here in bud, a coarse plant with a leaf-like red-tipped envelope to its united stamens?

Nowadays I scare up the woodcock (?) by shaded brooks and springs in the woods. It has a carry-legs flight and goes off with a sort of whistle. As you walk now in wood-paths, your head is encompassed with a swarm of ravenous, buzzing flies. It seems almost too hot for locusts.

Low hills, or even hillocks, which are stone-capped, — have rocky summits, — as that near James Baker's, remind me of mountains, which, in fact, they are on a small scale. The brows of earth, round which the trees and bushes trail like the hair of eyebrows, outside bald places, *templa*, primitive places, where lichens grow. I have some of the same sensations as if I sat on the summit of the Rocky Mountains. Some low places thus give a sense of elevation.

Sleeman says that no boy in India ever robs a bird's nest. Are they heathenish in that?

Walden and White Ponds have a brimful look at present, though the former is not quite so high as when I last observed it. The bare hills about it are reddened in spots where the pine leaves are sere on the ground. The *Vaccinium vacillans*, small glaucous blueberry, bears here and there a ripe one on

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the hills, and the *Rubus Canadensis*, low blackberry, bears already a few ripe ones on sandy banks like the railroad causeway, exposed to the sun. *Portulaca oleracea* (?), purslane, just in flower, bright yellow, in the garden.[1] Observed in the river yesterday a potamogeton with leaves half an inch wide and four or five long. The white spruce shoots when wilted have the same raspberry fragrance with those of the fir balsam, but not so much of it. *Galium asprellum*, pointed cleavers.

July 10. *Saturday*. Another day, if possible still hotter than the last. We have already had three or four such, and still no rain. The soil under the sward in the yard is dusty as an ash-heap for a foot in depth, and young trees are suffering and dying.

2 P. M. — To the North River in front of Major Barrett's.

It is with a suffocating sensation and a slight pain in the head that I walk the Union Turnpike where the heat is reflected from the road. The leaves of the elms on the dry highways begin to roll up. I have to lift my hat to let the air cool my head. But I find a refreshing breeze from over the river and meadow. In the hottest day you can be comfortable in the shade on the open shore of a pond or river where a zephyr comes over the water, sensibly cooled by it; that is, if the water is deep enough to cool it. I find the white melilot (*Melilotus leucantha*), a fragrant clover, in blossom by this roadside.

[1] This should have been in next day, 10th.

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We turn aside by a large rye-field near the old Lee place. The rye-fields are now quite yellow and ready for the sickle. Already there are many flavous colors in the landscape, much maturity of small seeds. The nodding heads of the rye make an agreeable maze to the eye. I hear now the huckleberry-bird, the red-eye, and the oven-bird. The robin, methinks, is oftener heard of late, even at noon. There are but few travellers abroad, on account of the oppressive heat. This heat is at the same time ripening and drying up the berries.

The long, narrow open intervals in the woods near the Assabet are quite dry now, in some parts yellow with the upright loosestrife. One of these meadows, a quarter of a mile long by a few rods wide, narrow and winding and bounded on all sides by maples, showing the under sides of their leaves, swamp white oaks with their glossy dark-green leaves, and birches, etc., and full of meadow-sweet just coming into bloom and cranberry vines and a dry kind of grass, is a very attractive place to walk in. We undressed on this side, carried our clothes down in the stream a considerable distance, and finally bathed in earnest from the opposite side. The heat tempted us to prolong this luxury, I think that I never felt the water so warm, yet it was not disagreeably so, though probably bathing in [it] was the less bracing and exhilarating, not so good as when you have to make haste, shivering, to get your clothes on in the wind; when ice has formed in the morning. But this is certainly the most luxurious. The river has here a sandy bottom and is for the most part quite shallow.

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I made quite an excursion up and down it in the water, a fluvial, a water, walk. It seemed the properest highway for this weather. Now in water a foot or two deep, now suddenly descending through valleys up to my neck, but all alike agreeable. Sometimes the bottom looked as if covered with long, flat, sharp-edged rocks. I could break off cakes three or four inches thick and a foot or two square. It was a conglomeration and consolidation of sand and pebbles, as it were cemented with oxid of iron (?), quite red with it, iron-colored, to the depth of an inch on the upper side, — a hard kind of pan covering or forming the bottom in many places. When I had left the river and walked in the woods for some time, and jumped into the river again, I was surprised to find for the first time how warm it was, — as it seemed to me, almost warm enough to boil eggs, — like water that has stood a considerable while in a kettle over a fire. There are many interesting objects of study as you walk up and down a clear river like this in the water, where you can see every inequality in the bottom and every object on it. The breams' nests are interesting and even handsome, and the shallow water in them over the sand is so warm to my hand that I think their ova will soon be hatched. Also the numerous heaps of stones, made I know not certainly by what fish, many of them rising above the surface. There are weeds on the bottom which remind you of the sea. The radical leaves of the floating-heart, which I have never seen mentioned, very large, five inches long and four wide, dull claret (and green where freshest), pellucid, with waved edges, in large tufts or

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dimples on the bottom, oftenest without the floating leaves, like lettuce or some kelps or carrageen moss (?). The bottom is also scored with furrows made by the clams moving about, sometimes a rod long; and always the clam lies at one end. So this fish can change its position and get into deeper and cooler water. I was in doubt before whether the clam made these furrows, for one apparently fresh that I examined had a "mud clam" at the end; but these, which were very numerous, had living clams.

There are but few fishes to be seen. They have, no doubt, retreated to the deepest water. In one somewhat muddier place, close to the shore, I came upon an old pout cruising with her young. She dashed away at my approach, but the fry remained. They were of various sizes from a third of an inch to an inch and a half long, quite black and pout-shaped, except that the head was most developed in the smallest. They were constantly moving about in a somewhat circular, or rather lenticular, school, about fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter, and I estimated that there were at least a thousand of them. Presently the old pout came back and took the lead of her brood, which followed her, or rather gathered about her, like chickens about a hen; but this mother had so many children she did n't know what to do. Her maternal yearnings must be on a great scale. When one half of the divided school found her out, they came down upon her and completely invested her like a small cloud. She was soon joined by another smaller pout, apparently her mate, and all, both old and young, began to be very familiar with me; they came

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round my legs and felt them with their feelers, and the old pouts nibbled my toes, while the fry half concealed my feet. Probably if I had been standing on the bank with my clothes on they would have been more shy. Ever and anon the old pouts dashed aside to drive away a passing bream or perch. The larger one kept circling about her charge, as if to keep them together within a certain compass. If any of her flock were lost or devoured she could hardly have missed them. I wondered if there was any calling of the roll at night, — whether she, like a faithful shepherdess, ever told her tale under some hawthorn in the river's dales. Ever ready to do battle with the wolves that might break into her fold. The young pouts are protected then for a season by the old. Some had evidently been hatched before the others. One of these large pouts had a large velvet-black spot which included the right pectoral fin, a kind of disease which I have often observed on them.

I wonder if any Roman emperor ever indulged in such luxury as this, — of walking up and down a river in torrid weather with only a hat to shade the head. What were the baths of Caracalla to this? Now we traverse a long water plain some two feet deep; now we descend into a darker river valley, where the bottom is lost sight of and the water rises to our armpits; now we go over a hard iron pan; now we stoop and go under a low bough of the *Salix nigra;* now we slump into soft mud amid the pads of the *Nymphæa odorata*, at this hour shut. On this road there is no other traveller to turn out for.

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When I first came out of the water, the short, dry grass was burning hot to my bare feet, and my skin was soon parched and dry in the sun.

We finally return to the dry land, and recline in the shade of an apple tree on a bank overlooking the meadow. I still hear the bobolink. (There are comparatively few clams in the sandy Assabet, but methinks there are more than usual everywhere this year.) The stones lying in the sun on this hillside where the grass has been cut are as hot to the hand as an egg just boiled, and very uncomfortable to hold, so do they absorb the heat. Every hour we expect a thundershower to cool the air, but none comes. We say they are gone down the river.

The skull-cap (*Scutellaria galericulata*) is open in this meadow, a pretty conspicuous blue flower. Also the *Drosera longifolia*. That sort of erigeron is open. *Sericocarpus conyzoides* (?), small, many-flowered, with few rays, has long been budded.

St. John's-wort is perhaps the prevailing flower now. Many fields are very yellow with it. In one such I was surprised to see rutabaga turnips growing well and showing no effects of drouth, and still more surprised when the farmer, a very worthy but perfect Don Quixote looking man, showed me with his hoe that the earth was quite fresh and moist there, only an inch beneath the surface. This, he thought, was the result of keeping the earth loose by cultivation. This man's farm is extremely long and narrow, so that he could hardly hear a dinner horn where he was then at work. I was pleased to find that the woman who called her husband

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from a distant field did not accomplish it without some skill and effort of the lungs.

July 11. 4.30 A. M. — To the river.

The shore is strewn with quite a long grove of young red maples two inches high, with the samaræ attached. So they are dispersed. The heart-leaf flower is abundant more than ever, but shut up at this hour. The first lily I noticed opened about half an hour after sunrise, or at 5 o'clock. The *Polygonum hydropiperoides*, I think it is, now in blossom in the mud by the river. Morning-glories are in perfection now, some dense masses of this vine with very red flowers, very attractive and cool-looking in dry mornings. They are very tender and soon defaced in a nosegay. The large orange lily with sword-shaped leaves, strayed from cultivation, by the roadside beyond the stone bridge.

It is a sufficient reason for walking in the forenoon sometimes that some flowers shut up at noon and do not open again during the day, thus showing a preference for that portion of the day.

P. M. — To Conantum.

The wind makes it rather more comfortable to-day. That small globose white flower with glossy radical leaves is common now on the muddy shore of the river. The fishes' nests are left high and dry, and I perceive that they are distinctly hollowed, five or six inches deep, in the sand, *i. e.* below the surrounding surface. Here are some which still contain their panful of water, but are no longer connected with

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the river. They have a distinct raised edge of sand about one and a half inches high and three or four wide. The lilies I have tried in water this warmest weather have wilted the first day. Only the water can produce and sustain such flowers. Those which are left high and dry, or even in very shallow water, are wont to have a dwarfed growth. The Victoria lily is a water flower.

The river is low. Now is the time for meadow walking. (I am in the meadow north of Hubbard's Bridge.) You go dry-shod now through meadows which were comparatively impassable before, — those western reserves which you had not explored. We are thankful that the water has preserved them inviolate so long. There is a cheerful light reflected from the under sides of the ferns in the drier meadows now, and has been for some time, especially in breezy weather. It was so in June. The dusty roads and roadsides begin to show the effects of drouth. The corn rolls.

The bass on Conantum is now well in blossom. It probably commenced about the 9th. Its flowers are conspicuous for a tree, and a rather agreeable odor fills the air. The tree resounds with the hum of bees on the flowers. On the whole it is a rich sight. Is it not later than the chestnut? The elder is a very conspicuous and prevalent flower now, with its large flat cymes.

Pogonias and calopogons are very abundant in the meadows. They are interesting, if only for their high color. Any redness is, after all, rare and precious. It is the color of our blood. The rose owes its preëmi-

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nence in great measure to its color. It is said to be from the Celtic *rhos*, red. It is nature's most precious color.

Impatiens fulva, by Corner Spring. I hear often nowadays the kingbird's chattering twitter. As you walk under oaks, you perceive from time to time a considerable twig come gently falling to the ground, whose stem has been weakened by a worm, and here and there lie similar twigs whose leaves are now withered and changed.

How valuable and significant is shade now! Trees appear valuable for shade mainly, and we observe their shadows as much as their form and foliage. The waving of the meadow-grass near Fair Haven Isle is very agreeable and refreshing to one looking down from an elevation. It appears not merely like a waving or undulation, but a progress, a creeping, as of an invisible army, over it, its flat curly head. The grass appears tufted, *watered*. On the river the ripple is continued into the pads, where it is smoother, — a longer undulation. Pines or evergreens do not attract so much attention now. They have retired on the laurels of the winter campaign.

What is called genius is the abundance of life or health, so that whatever addresses the senses, as the flavor of these berries, or the lowing of that cow, which sounds as if it echoed along a cool mountain-side just before night, where odoriferous dews perfume the air and there is everlasting vigor, serenity, and expectation of perpetual untarnished morning, — each sight and sound and scent and flavor, — intoxicates with a healthy

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intoxication. The shrunken stream of life overflows its banks, makes and fertilizes broad intervals, from which generations derive their sustenances. This is the true overflowing of the Nile. So exquisitely sensitive are we, it makes us embrace our fates, and, instead of suffering or indifference, we enjoy and bless. If we have not dissipated the vital, the divine, fluids, there is, then, a circulation of vitality beyond our bodies. The cow is nothing. Heaven is not there, but in the condition of the hearer. I am thrilled to think that I owe a perception to the commonly gross sense of taste, that I have been inspired through the palate, that these berries have fed my brain.[1] After I had been eating these simple, wholesome, ambrosial fruits on this high hillside, I found my senses whetted, I was young again, and whether I stood or sat I was not the same creature.

The yellow lily is not open-petalled like the red, nor is its flower upright, but drooping. On the whole I am most attracted by the red. They both make freckles beautiful.

Fragrances must not be overpowering, however sweet. I love the sweet fragrance of melilot. The *Circæa alpina*, enchanter's-nightshade, by Corner Spring, low, weed-like, somewhat like touch-me-not leaves. Was it not the *C. Lutetiana* (a larger plant) that I found at Saw Mill Brook?

July 12. I observed this morning a row of several dozen swallows perched on the telegraph-wire by the bridge, and ever and anon a part of them would launch

[1] [*Walden*, p. 241; Riv. 339.]

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forth as with one consent, circle a few moments over the water or meadow, and return to the wire again.

2 P. M. — To the Assabet.

Still no rain. The clouds, cumuli, lie in high piles along the southern horizon, glowing, downy, or cream-colored, broken into irregular summits in the form of bears erect, or demigods, or rocking stones, infant Herculeses; and still we think that from their darker bases a thunder-shower may issue. In other parts of the heavens are long stratified whitish clouds, and in the northwest floating isles, white above and darker beneath. The kingbird is active over the causeway, notwithstanding the heat, and near the woods I hear the huckleberry-bird and the song sparrow. The turtle-dove flutters before you in shady wood-paths, or looks out with extended neck, losing its balance, slow to leave its perch.

Now for another fluvial walk. There is always a current of air above the water, blowing up or down the course of the river, so that this is the coolest highway. Divesting yourself of all clothing but your shirt and hat, which are to protect your exposed parts from the sun, you are prepared for the fluvial excursion. You choose what depths you like, tucking your toga higher or lower, as you take the deep middle of the road or the shallow sidewalks. Here is a road where no dust was ever known, no intolerable drouth. Now your feet expand on a smooth sandy bottom, now contract timidly on pebbles, now slump in genial fatty mud — greasy, saponaceous — amid the pads. You scare out whole schools of small breams and perch, and some-

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times a pickerel, which have taken shelter from the sun under the pads. This river is so clear compared with the South Branch, or main stream, that all their secrets are betrayed to you. Or you meet with and interrupt a turtle taking a more leisurely walk up the stream. Ever and anon you cross some furrow in the sand, made by a muskrat, leading off to right or left to their galleries in the bank, and you thrust your foot into the entrance, which is just below the surface of the water and is strewn with grass and rushes, of which they make their nests. In shallow water near the shore, your feet at once detect the presence of springs in the bank emptying in, by the sudden coldness of the water, and there, if you are thirsty, you dig a little well in the sand with your hands, and when you return, after it has settled and clarified itself, get a draught of pure cold water there. The fishes are very forward to find out such places, and I have observed that a frog will occupy a cool spring, however small.

The most striking phenomenon in this stream is the heaps of small stones about the size of a walnut, more or less, which line the shore in shallow water, one every rod or two, the recent ones frequently rising by more than half their height above the water, at present, *i. e.* a foot or a foot and a half, and sharply conical, the older flattened by the elements and greened over with the threadlike stem of *Ranunculus filiformis*, with its minute bright-yellow flower. Some of these heaps contain two cartloads of stones, and as probably the creature that raised them took up one at a time, it must have been a stupendous task. They are from the size

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of a hen's egg down to the smallest gravel, and some are so perfect that I cannot believe they were made before the river fell.

Now you walk through fields of the small potamogeton (*heterophyllus* or *hybridus*), now in flower; now through the glossy pads of the white or the yellow water-lily, stepping over the now closed buds of the latter; now pause in the shade of a swamp white oak (up to your middle in the cool element), to which the very skaters and water-bugs confine themselves for the most part. It is an objection to walking in the mud that from time to time you have to pick the leeches off you. The stinkpot's shell, covered with mud and fine green weeds, gives him exactly the appearance of a stone on the bottom, and I noticed a large snapping turtle on one of the dark-brown rocks in the middle of the river (apparently for coolness, in company with a painted tortoise), so completely the color of the rock that, if it had not been for his head curved upwards to a point from anxiety, I should not have detected him. Thus nature subjects them to the same circumstances with the stones, and paints them alike, as with one brush, for their safety.

What art can surpass the rows of maples and elms and swamp white oaks which the water plants along the river, — I mean in variety and gracefulness, — conforming to the curves of the river.

Excepting those fences which are mere boundaries of individual property, the walker can generally perceive the reason for those which he is obliged to get over. This wall runs along just on the edge of the hill and

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following all its windings, to separate the more level and cultivatable summit from the slope, which is only fit for pasture or wood-lot, and that other wall below divides the pasture or wood-lot from the richer low grass ground or potato-field, etc. Even these crooked walls are not always unaccountable and lawless.

The mower, perchance, cuts some plants which I have never seen in flower.

I hear the toads still at night, together with bullfrogs, but not so universally nor loud as formerly. I go to walk at twilight, — at the same time that toads go to their walks, and are seen hopping about the sidewalks or the pump. Now, a quarter after nine, as I walk along the river-bank, long after starlight, and perhaps an hour or more after sunset, I see some of those high-pillared clouds of the day, in the southwest, still reflecting a downy light from the regions of day, they are so high. It is a pleasing reminiscence of the day in the midst of the deepening shadows of the night. The dor-bugs hum around me, as I sit on the river-bank beyond the ash tree. Warm as is the night, — one of the warmest in the whole year, — there is an aurora, a low arc of a circle, in the north. The twilight ends to-night apparently about a quarter before ten. There is no moon.

July 13. A journal, a book that shall contain a record of all your joy, your ecstasy.

4 P. M. — To R. W. E.'s wood-lot south of Walden.

The pool by Walden is now *quite yellow* with the common utricularia (*vulgaris*). This morning the hea-

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vens were overcast with a fog, which did not clear off till late in the forenoon. I heard the muttering of thunder behind it about 5 A. M. and thought it would rain at last, but there were dewy cobwebs on the grass, and it did not rain, but we had another hot dry day after all.

The northern wild red cherry of the woods is ripe, handsome, bright red, but scarcely edible; also, sooner than I expected, huckleberries, both blue and black; the former, not described by Gray or Bigelow, in the greater abundance, and must have been ripe several days. They are thick enough to pick. The black only here and there. The former is apparently a variety of the latter, blue with bloom and a tough or thick skin. There are evidently several kinds of huckleberries and blueberries not described by botanists: of the very early blueberries at least two varieties, one glossy black with dark-green leaves, the other a rich light blue with bloom and yellowish-green leaves; and more kinds I remember. I found the *Vaccinium corymbosum* well ripe on an exposed hillside. Each day now I scare up woodcocks by shady springs and swamps. The dark-purple amelanchier are the sweetest berries I have tasted yet. One who walks the woods and hills daily, expecting to see the first berry that turns, will be surprised at last to find them ripe and thick before he is aware of it, ripened, he cannot tell how long before, in some more favorable situation. It is impossible to say what day — almost what week — the huckleberries begin to be ripe, unless you are acquainted with, and daily visit, every huckleberry bush in the town, at least every place where they grow.

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Already the goldenrod, apparently *Solidago stricta*, willow-leaved goldenrod, preaches of the lapse of time, on the Walden road. How many a tale its yellow tells! The *Polygala sanguinea* and *P. cruciata* in Brister's meadow, both numerous and well out. The last has a fugacious (?) spicy scent, in which, methinks, I detect the scent of nutmegs. Afterward I find that it is the lower part of the stem and root which is most highly scented, like checkerberry, and not fugacious. The *Verbena urticifolia*, white vervain. Succory, or *Cichorium intybus*. It appears to shut up this hot weather. Is that nettle-like plant by the wall below Mrs. Heywood's *Urtica gracilis*? Now in blossom. *Polygonum aviculare*, goose-grass, about the door.

The weather has been remarkably warm for a week or ten days, the thermometer at ninety-five degrees, more or less; and we have had no rain. You have not thought of cold or of taking cold, night or day, but only how you should be cool enough. Such weather as this the only use of clothing is to cover nakedness and to protect the body from the sun. It is remarkable that, though it would be a great luxury to throw aside all clothing now except one thin robe to keep off the sun, yet throughout the whole community not one is found to do it.

July 14. A writer who does not speak out of a full experience uses torpid words, wooden or lifeless words, such words as "humanitary," which have a paralysis in their tails.

Is it not more attractive to be a sailor than a farmer?

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The farmer's son is restless and wants to go to sea. Is it not better to plow the ocean than the land? In the former case the plow runs further in its furrow before it turns. You may go round the world before the mast, but not behind the plow.

Morton quotes Wafer as saying of some albinos among the Indians of Darien that "they are quite white, but their whiteness is like that of a horse, quite different from the fair or pale European, as they have not the least tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion. . . . Their eyebrows are milk-white, as is likewise the hair of their heads, which is very fine, inclining to a curl, and growing to the length of six or eight inches. . . . They seldom go abroad in the daytime, the sun being disagreeable to them, and causing their eyes, which are weak and poring, to water, especially if it shines towards them; yet they see very well by moonlight, from which we call them moon-eyed." In Drake's "Collection of Voyages." Neither in our thoughts in these moonlight walks, methinks, is there "the least tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion," but we are, perchance, intellectually and morally albinos, children of Endymion whose parents have walked much by moonlight. Walking much by moonlight, conversing with the moon, makes us, then, albinos. Methinks we should rather represent Endymion in colorless marble, or in the whiteness of marble, than painted of the ruddy color of ordinary youths.[1]

Saw to-day for the first time this season fleets of yellow butterflies dispersing before us, [as] we rode

[1] [*Excursions*, pp. 325, 326; Riv. 400.]

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along berrying on the Walden road. Their yellow fleets are in the offing. Do I ever see them in numbers off the road? They are a yellow flower that blossoms generally about this time. Like a mackerel fleet, with their small hulls and great sails. Collected now in compact but gorgeous assembly in the road, like schooners in a harbor, a haven; now suddenly dispersing on our approach and filling the air with yellow snowflakes in their zigzag flight, or as when a fair wind calls those schooners out and disperses them over the broad ocean.

How deep or perhaps slaty sky-blue are those blueberries that grow in the shade! It is an unexpected and thrilling discovery to find such ethereal fruits in dense drooping clusters under the fresh green of oak and hickory sprouts. Those that grow in the sun appear to be the same species, only to have lost their bloom and freshness, and hence are darker.[1]

The youth gets together his materials to build a bridge to the moon, or perchance a palace or temple on the earth, and at length the middle-aged man concludes to build a wood-shed with them.

Trees have commonly two growths in the year, a spring and a fall growth, the latter sometimes equalling the former, and you can see where the first was checked whether by cold or drouth, and wonder what there was in the summer to produce this check, this blight. So is it with man; most have a spring growth only, and never get over this first check to their youthful hopes; but plants of hardier constitution, or perchance planted in a more genial soil, speedily recover

[1] *Vide* p. [283].

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themselves, and, though they bear the scar or knot in remembrance of their disappointment, they push forward again and have a vigorous fall growth which is equivalent to a new spring. These two growths are now visible on the oak sprouts, the second already nearly equalling the first.

Murder will out. Morton detects the filthiness of the lower class of the ancient Peruvians by the hair of old mummies being "charged with desiccated vermin, which, though buried for centuries in the sand, could not possibly be mistaken for anything else."

July 16. *Chenopodium album*, pigweed. The common form of the arrowhead, with larger, clear-white flowers. Also another arrowhead, not in flower. Xyris, yellow-eyed grass, with three pretty yellow petals atop. The forget-me-not is still abundant.

There is sport in the boy's water-mill, which grinds no corn and saws no logs and yields no money, but not in the man's.

Pyrus arbutifolia melanocarpa fruit begins to be black. *Cephalanthus occidentalis*, button-bush.

The bass on Conantum is a very rich sight now, though the flowers are somewhat stale; a solid mass of verdure and of flowers with its massed and rounded outline. Its twigs are drooping, weighed down with pendulous flowers, so that, when you stand directly under it and look up, you see one mass of flowers, a flowery canopy. Its conspicuous leaf-like bracts, too,

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have the effect of flowers. The tree resounds with the hum of bees, — bumblebees and honey-bees; rose-bugs and butterflies, also, are here, — a perfect susurrus, a sound, as C. says, unlike any other in nature, — not like the wind, as that is like the sea. The bees abound on the flowers of the smooth sumach now. The branches of this tree touch the ground, and it has somewhat the appearance of being weighed down with flowers. The air is full of sweetness. The tree is full of poetry.

I observe the yellow butterflies everywhere in the fields and on the pontederias, which now give a faint blue tinge to the sides of the rivers. I hear the *link link*, fall-like note of the bobolink (?) in the meadows; he has lost the *bobo* off. Is it the goldfinch that goes twittering over, but which I cannot see? This is a still, thoughtful day, the air full of vapors which shade the earth, preparing rain for the morrow. The sarsaparilla berries are black. The weeds begin to be high in low grounds and low wood-paths, — the *Eupatorium purpureum* and goldenrods, etc., — suggesting a certain fecundity and vigor in nature, so that we love to wade through their ranks. The *Rhexia Virginica*, the meadow-beauty, high-colored, more beautiful than you remembered. The *Stachys aspera*, or hedge-nettle, looking like a white prunella with a long spike, in the meadows. The *Platanthera lacera*, ragged orchis, an unpainted flower. Is that delicate rose-purple flower in the Miles Swamp, with a long slender panicle and large leaves in a sort of whorl with long petioles, the *Desmodium acuminatum*, pointed-leaved tick-trefoil or hedy-

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sarum? The *Lechea major*, larger pinweed, everywhere in dry fields. Is it open?

July 17. *Saturday.* Cooler weather; a gentle steady rain, not shower; such coolness as rain makes; not sharp and invigorating, exhilarating, as in the spring, but thoughtful, reminding of the fall; still, moist, unoppressive weather, in which corn and potatoes grow; not a vein of the northwest wind or the northeast. The coolness of the west tempered with rain and mist. As I walked by the river last evening, I heard no toads. A coolness as from an earth covered with vegetation, such as the toad finds in the high grass. A verdurous coolness, not a snowy or icy one, in the shadow of the vapors which the heat makes rise from the earth. Can this be dog-dayish?

P. M. — A summer rain. A gentle steady rain, long a-gathering, without thunder or lightning, — such as we have not, and, methinks, could not have had, earlier than this.

To Beck Stow's.

I pick raspberries dripping with rain beyond Sleepy Hollow. This weather is rather favorable to thought. On all sides is heard a gentle dripping of the rain on the leaves, yet it is perfectly warm. It is a day of comparative leisure to many farmers. Some go to the mill-dam and the shops; some go a-fishing. The *Antennaria margaritacea*, pearly everlasting, is out; and the thoroughworts, red and white, begin (?) to show their colors. Notwithstanding the rain, some children still pursue their blackberrying on the Great Fields.

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Swamp-pink lingers still. Roses are not so numerous as they were. Some which I examine now have short, stout hooked thorns and narrow bracts. Is it the *Rosa Carolina?* I love to see a clear crystalline water flowing out of a swamp over white sand and decayed wood, spring-like. The year begins to have a husky look or scent in some quarters. I remark the green coats of the hazelnuts, and hear the permanent jay. Some fields are covered now with tufts or clumps of indigo-weed, yellow with blossoms, with a few dead leaves turned black here and there.

Beck Stow's Swamp! What an incredible spot to think of in town or city! When life looks sandy and barren, is reduced to its lowest terms, we have no appetite, and it has no flavor, then let me visit such a swamp as this, deep and impenetrable, where the earth quakes for a rod around you at every step, with its open water where the swallows skim and twitter, its meadow and cotton-grass, its dense patches of dwarf[1] andromeda, now brownish-green, with clumps of blueberry bushes, its spruces and its verdurous border of woods imbowering it on every side. The trees now in the rain look heavy and rich all day, as commonly at twilight, drooping with the weight of wet leaves.

That *Sericocarpus conyzoides* prevails now, and the entire-leaved erigeron still abounds everywhere. The meadows on the Turnpike are *white* with the meadow-rue *now more than ever*. They are filled with it many feet high. The *Lysimachia lanceolata* is very common too. All flowers are handsomer in rain. Methinks the

[1] [This word is queried in pencil.]

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sweet-briar is done. The hardhack, whose spires are not yet abundant, stands to me for agreeable coarseness. Swallows are active throughout this rain. *Lobelia inflata*, Indian-tobacco. *Lappa major*, burdock. *Amaranthus hybridus*, though not yet red. *Verbena hastata*, blue vervain. *Gnaphalium uliginosum* by the roadside, cudweed. Again methinks I hear the goldfinch, but not for a day or two the bobolink. At evening the prunellas in the grass like the sky glow purple, which were blue all day. The vetch I looked for is mown, but I find it fresh elsewhere. The caducous polygala has the odor of checkerberry at its root, and hence I thought the flower had a fugacious, spicy fragrance. *Hypericum Canadense*. The slender bellflower, galium-like, with a triangular stem in low grounds now.

July 18. *Sunday*. 8.30 A. M. — To the Sudbury meadows in boat.

Peter Robbins says that the rain of yesterday has not reached the potatoes, after all. Exorbitant potatoes! It takes a good deal to reach them, — serious preaching to convert them. The white lilies and the floating-heart are both well open at this hour, and more abundant than I have noticed them before. Like ducks, the former sit on the water as far as I can see on both sides. As we push away from Monroe's shore, the robins are singing and the swallows twittering. There is hardly a cloud in the sky. There are dewy cobwebs on the grass; so this is a fit morning for any adventure. It is one of those everlasting mornings, with

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cobwebs on the grass, which are provided for long enterprises. It is a sabbath within the water as well as in the air and on the land, and even the little pickerels not half so long as your finger appear to be keeping it holy amid the pads. There is a sort of dusty or mealy light in the bream's tail and fins waving in clear water. The river is now in all its glory, adorned with water-lilies on both sides. Walkers and sailers ordinarily come hither in the afternoon, when the lilies are shut, and so never see the river in its pride. They come after the exhibition is over for the day, and do not suspect it. We are gliding swiftly up the river by Barrett's Bend. The surface of the water is the place to see the pontederia from, for now the spikes of flowers are all brought into a dense line, — a heavy line of blue, a foot or more in width, on one or both sides of the river. The pontederias are now in their prime, there being no withered heads. They are very freshly blue. In the sun, when you are looking west, they are of a violaceous blue. The lilies are in greater profusion than when we came to see them before. They appear to be too many for the insects, and we find enough untouched. Horsemint (*Mentha Canadensis*) is now out.

We take a bath at Hubbard's Bend. The water seems fresher, as the air, in the morning. Again under weigh, we scare up the great bittern amid the pontederia, and, rowing to where he alights, come within three feet of him and scare him up again. He flies sluggishly away plowing the air with the coulter of his breast-bone, and alighting ever higher up the stream.

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We scare him up many times in the course of an hour. The surface of the river is spotted with the radical leaves of the floating-heart, large and thin and torn, rarely whole, which something has loosened from the bottom. The larks and blackbirds and kingbirds are heard in the meadows. But few button-bushes are in blossom yet. Are they dark-brown weed-like fibrous roots of the plant itself that invest its stems below? Harmless bright downy clouds form in the atmosphere on every side and sail the heavens.

After passing Hubbard's Bridge, looking up the smooth river between the rows of button-bushes, willows, and pads, we see the sun shining on Fair Haven Hill behind a sun-born cloud, while we are in shadow, — a misty golden light, yellow, fern-like, with shadows of clouds flitting across its slope, — and horses in their pasture standing with outstretched necks to watch us; and now they dash up the steep in single file, as if to exhibit their limbs and mettle. The carcass of a cow which has recently died lies on the sandy shore under Fair Haven, close to the water. Perhaps she was poisoned with the water parsnip, which is now in flower and abounds along the side of the river. We have left the dog in the middle of Fair Haven Bay swimming in our wake, while we are rowing past Lee's, and we see no more of him. How simple are the ornaments of a farmhouse! To one rowing past in the middle of a warm summer day, a well at a distance from the house in the shadow of an oak, as here, is a charming sight. The house, too, with no yard but an open lawn sloping to the river. And young turkeys seen wandering in the

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grass, and ever and anon hopping up as if a snake had scared them. The pontederias are alive with butterflies. Here is a fisherman's willow pole left to mark a lucky place, with green shoots at the top. The other day I noticed that Neighbor Gorman's willow bean-poles had grown more than his beans. We now go through the narrow gut at the bend near the town bound. A comfortable day. Methinks we shall have no torrid blazing dry heats after this,[1] but muggy, dog-dayish weather, tempered by mists and shadows of fogs, the evaporation of vegetation? The nights, too, can be decidedly cool.

No one has ever put into words what the odor of water-lilies expresses. A sweet and innocent purity. The perfect purity of the flower is not to be surpassed. They now begin to shut up. Looking toward the sun, I cannot see them, cannot distinguish lilies from the sun reflected from the pads.

Thus we go on, into the Sudbury meadows, opening the hills. The near hills, even, have a misty blueness, — a liquid one, like a field of oats yet green. Both wish now to face up-stream and see the hills open. The *Peltandra Virginica* (*Calla*), which I saw well budded opposite the Pantry, July 1st, has flowered and curved downward into the water and mud, but I observe other flowers to come. The columbine lingers still. The red-eye sings at noon, and the song sparrow. The bobolink I do not hear of late, — not since this fall-like, late-feeling weather. Now the fogs have begun, in midsummer and mid-haying time. We go inland to

[1] [Two interrogation-points in the margin here.]

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the Jenkins house spring, through the handsome oak grove, white and black (?), eight or nine of them, on the further edge of the meadow, where the haymakers' path comes in. Strawberries are still occasionally found in meadows. The *Cerasus Virginiana*, or choke-cherry, is turning, nearly ripe. We sit on the edge of the hill at the Jenkins house, looking northward over a retired dell in the woods, an unfrequented johnswort and blackberry field, surrounded by a deep forest — with several tall white pines against the horizon, a study of which you would never tire. The swallows twitter overhead, the locust, we know not where, is z-ing, and the huckleberry-bird is heard on the birches. The ground under the apple tree, where we lie, is strewn with small sun-baked apples, but we are not yet reminded of apples.

When I think of the London *Times* and the reviews here, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and of the kind of life which it is possible to live here, I perceive that this, the natural side, has not got into literature. Think of an essay on human life, through all which was heard the note of the huckleberry-bird still ringing, as here it rings ceaselessly. As if it were the muse invoked! The *Revue des Deux Mondes* does not embrace this view of things, nor imply it.

Which neottia have I found? In the front and lowest rank, the narrow-leaved polygonum, in the river, I see a flower or two beginning. The farmers have cut some meadow-hay here. In the broader meadows the river winds the most, where there are no iron-bound rocky hills to constrain it. Through all these Sudbury mead-

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ows it is a perfect meander, where no wind will serve the sailer long. It is a luxury to sit sailing or rowing here and look off to the hills, at the deep shadows of the trees in which the cattle stand. We land on the left, half a mile above Sherman's Bridge, ramble to the "sand" and poplars, where I picked up two arrow-heads. The *Spergula arvensis*, corn-spurry, which has long been in blossom; the *Raphanus Raphanistrum*, wild radish; the *Lycopus sinuatus*, horehound. Here is a horse who keeps the hilltop for the breeze.

We push still further up the river into the great meadow, scaring the bitterns, the largest and the next in size. In many parts of the river the pickerel-weed is several rods wide, its blueness akin to the misty blue air which paints the hills. You thin it by rising in the boat; you thicken or deepen it by sitting low. (When we looked from the hills, there was a general sheeny light from the broad, level meadow, from the bent grass, watered, as it were, with darker streaks where a darker grass, the pipes, etc., bordered the (for the most part) concealed river.) The lilies are shut. First on the edge of the bright river in the sun, in this great meadow, are the pads, then the pontederia or polygonum, then the bulrushes standing in dense squadrons, or pipes or meadow-grass, then the broad heavens, in which small downy clouds are constantly forming and dissolving. No fear of rain. The sky is a pretty clear blue, yet not such a skimmed-milk blue, methinks, as in winter; some cream left in the milk. I cannot believe that any of these dissolving cloudlets will be rainbow-tinged or mother-o'-pearled. I observe that even in these

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meadows, where no willows nor button-bushes line the shore, there is still a pretty constant difference between the shores. The border of pontederia is rarely of equal depth on both sides at once, but it keeps that side in the meander where the sediment is deposited, the shortest course which will follow the shore, as I have dotted it,

crossing from this side to that as the river meanders; for on the longest side the river is active, not passive, wearing into the bank, and runs there more swiftly. This is the longest line of blue that nature paints with flowers in our fields, though the lupines may have been more densely blue within a small compass. Thus by a natural law a river, instead of flowing straight through its meadows, meanders from side to side and fertilizes this side or that, and adorns its banks with flowers. The river has its active and its passive side, its right and left breast.

Return. There is a grand view of the river from the hill near Rice's. The outlines of this hill, as you ascend it, and its various swells are very grateful, closely grazed, with a few shade trees on its sides. You look far south over the gulf meadow, and north also. The meadow-grass seen from this side has no sheen on it. Round Hill is a mathematical curve. The petals of the rhexia have a beautiful clear purple with a violet tinge. The *Brasenia peltata*, or water-shield, which was budded July 1st, is now in blossom, — obscure reddish blossoms. To what plant does that elliptical pad belong whose lobes lap more than half an inch, three inches long,

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and stem lenticular on a cross-section? Does the *Kalmiana* so vary? What kind of lettuce (or *Nabalus?*) is that, with triangular hastate leaves, reddish stem, and apparently whitish flowers, now budded?

When near home, just before sundown, the sun still inconveniently warm, we were surprised to observe on the uppermost point of each pontederia leaf a clear drop of dew already formed, or flowing down the leaf, where all seemed still warmth and dryness, also as often hanging from the lobes below. It appeared a wonderful chemistry by which the broad leaf had collected this pearly drop on its uppermost extremity. The sun had no sooner sunk behind the willows and the button-bushes, than this process commenced. And now we see a slight steam like smoke rising from amidst the pontederias. In half an hour the river and the meadows are white with fog, like a frosted cake. As you stand on the bank in the twilight, it suddenly moves up in sprayey clouds, moved by an unfelt wind, and invests you where you stand, its battalions of mists reaching even to the road.

But there is less in the morning.

Every poet has trembled on the verge of science.

Got green grapes to stew.

July 19. P. M. — R. W. E.'s cliff.

Phytolacca decandra, poke, in blossom. The *Cerasus pumila* ripe. The chestnuts on Pine Hill being in blossom reveals the rounded tops of the trees; separates them, and makes a richer and more varied scene.

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July 20. To Assabet behind Lee Place.

Perceived a small weed, coming up all over the fields, which has an aromatic scent. Did not at first discover that it was blue-curls. It is a little affecting that the year should be thus solemn and regular, that this weed should have withheld itself so long, biding its appointed time, and now, without fail, be coming up all over the land, still extracting that well-known aroma out of the elements, to adorn its part of the year! I also perceive one of the coarse late fleabanes making itself conspicuous. The stinging nettle is not very obvious, methinks. Fields are yellow with grain, being cut and stacked, or still standing. Long rows I see from far, as they were left by the cradle. *Elodea Virginica*, marsh St. John's-wort. Dug open a muskrat's gallery. It was flat on the bottom, on sand, and quite regularly arched, and strewn with coarse meadow-grass or flags for a carpet. There was half of a critchicrotch in it.

Sunset. — To Cliffs.

The clouds, as usual, are arranged with reference to the sunset. The sun is gone. An amber light and golden glow. The first redness is on clouds in the east horizon. As we go by the farmhouses, the chickens are coming home to roost. The horns of the moon only three or four days old look very sharp, still cloud-like, in the midst of a blue space, prepared to shine a brief half-hour before it sets. The redness now begins to fade on eastern clouds, and the western cloudlets glow with burnished copper alloyed with gold. As we approach the woods, we perceive a fresh, cool evening

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scent from them. The squeak of the nighthawk is heard; the hum of mosquitoes in the woods; the song sparrow and the huckleberry-bird. The bat seen flying over the path. The western clouds grow more red or fiery, by fits and starts, and now, as suddenly, their glory departs, and they remain gray or greenish. We see from the hill darkness infolding the village, collected first in the elm-tops. If it were not for the light-colored barns and white houses, it would already be dark there. The redness of the clouds, or the golden or coppery or fuscous glow, appears to endure almost till starlight. Then the cloudlets in the west turn rapidly dark, the shadow of night advances in the east, and the first stars become visible. Then, and before the western clouds, the light behind them having faded, do or appear to disperse and contract and leave a clear sky, when I invert my head (on Fair Haven Hill), the dark cloudlets in the west horizon are like isles, like the tops of mountains cut off by the gross atmosphere.

The pitch pine woods are heavy and dark, but the river is full of golden light and more conspicuous than by day. It is starlight. You see the first star in the southwest, and know not how much earlier you might have seen it had you looked. Now the first whip-poor-will sings hollowly in the dark pitch pine wood on Bear Garden Hill, as if the night had never ceased, and it had never ceased to sing, only now we heard it. And now, when we had thought the day birds gone to roost, the wood thrush takes up the strain. The bullfrog trumps. We sit on the warm rocks (Cliffs). Now is the evening red; late into the night almost it reaches.

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The gross atmosphere of day, closest to the heels of the sun, is the last to glow red, — this general low fuliginous, lurid redness, long after the sunset and the glowing of the clouds. The western sky is comparatively clear, the clouds that followed in day's train having swept by. Night is seen settling down with mists on Fair Haven Bay. The stars are few and distant; the fireflies fewer still. Will they again be as numerous as after the early thunder-showers?

Now there is a *second* fuscous glow, brassy (?) glow, on the few low western cloudlets, when we thought the sun had bid us a final adieu, — quite into evening. Those small clouds, the rearmost guard of day, which were wholly dark, are again lit up for a moment with a dull-yellowish glow and again darken; and now the evening redness deepens till all the west or northwest horizon is red; as if the sky were rubbed there with some rich Indian pigment, a permanent dye; as if the Artist of the world had mixed his red paints on the edge of the inverted saucer of the sky. An exhilarating, cheering redness, most wholesome. There should be a red race of men. I would look into the west at this hour till my face permanently reflects that red. It is like the stain of some berries crushed along the edge of the sky. The crescent moon, meanwhile, has grown more silvery, and, as it sank in [the] west, more yellowish, and the outline of the old moon in its arms was visible if you did not look directly at it. The first distinct moonlight was observed some time before this, like the first gray light of the dawn reflected from the tree-tops below us. Some dusky redness lasted almost

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till the last traces of daylight disappeared. The last took place about 10 o'clock, and about the same time the moon went down.

At evening the eastern clouds, the western clouds, and the atmosphere of the west horizon have one history successively — a fainter glow and redness, gradually and by stages deepening till the darkness prevails.

This afternoon, in the gutter by roadside beyond S. Wheeler's, *Penthorum sedoides* (?), ditch stonecrop. Is that nettle-like but smooth and, I should say, obtusely four-angled plant in the low moist ground on the Assabet the *Boehmeria cylindrica*? *Alisma Plantago*, water-plantain, about out of flower, by the Assabet; small leaves like the plantain. What is that ternate-leaved vine with yellow dusty excrescences by the Assabet, not in bloom?[1] The *Vernonia Noveboracensis* is budded by the riverside.

July 21. 4 A. M. — Robins sing as loud as in spring, and the chip-bird breathes in the dawn. The eastern waters reflect the morning redness, and now it fades into saffron. And now the glow concentrates about one point. At this season the northeast horizon is lit up and glows red and saffron, and the sun sets so far northwest that but a small part of the north horizon is left unillustrated. The meadows are incrusted with low, flat, white, and apparently hard fog. Soon it begins to rise and disperse.

Walden Pond and Lake Superior are both uncommonly high this year.

[1] Ground-nut (?).

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At sunset to Corner Spring.

A broken strain from a bobolink. A golden robin once or twice to-day. The *Mimulus ringens*, or monkey-flower; one of the most noticeable of this class of flowers. Is that *Sium lineare*, with a *smooth, round* stem and *fringe-serrate* linear leaves, without bulblets? [1] *Eupatorium pubescens*, ovate-leaved eupatorium, not quite out, with a fastigiate corymb. All sunsets are not equally splendid. To-night there is not a cloud in the west, and the sun goes down without pomp or circumstance, — only a faint glow in the gross atmosphere next the earth after a warm day. Those first (not moss) roses appear to be out of bloom. Those I see now have stout, rather short, hooked prickles or thorns. This evening is remarkably serene. It is awfully still; not a bird now heard, only the *fine* sound of crickets. I see the earliest star fifteen or twenty minutes before the red is deepest in the horizon. I mean the atmospheric redness. It is not generally, *i. e.* conspicuously, starlight till that begins to fade. Perhaps it is not time to light a candle till then, for some duskiness should intervene to separate between day and night. This redness is at first intenser as reflected in the river, as, when you look into the horizon with inverted head, all colors are intensified. Methinks I hear my old friend the locust in the alders. The river is perfectly smooth, reflecting the golden sky and the red, for there is an unexpectedly bright and general golden or amber glow from the upper atmosphere in the west. At evening lakes and rivers become thus placid. Every

[1] [See p. 295.]

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dimple made by a fish or insect is betrayed. Evening descends on the waters. There is not a breath of air. Now is the time to be on the water, for there is no mist rising and little evening coolness or damp. At morning and at evening this precious color suffuses the sky. Evening is the reverse of the day with all its stages intensified and exaggerated. The roads and bridges are strewn with hay which has dropped from the loads. The whip-poor-will began to sing at earliest twilight. Do we perceive such a deep Indian red after the first starlight at any other season as now in July? How far we smell carrion at night! A dead cow lies by the shore under Fair Haven nearly half a mile above this causeway. When I passed this way at earliest starlight I did not smell it, but now, returning half an hour later, it taints [the] atmosphere of the causeway from one end to the other, and I am obliged to hurry over, — borne down over the meadow on the damp air. The root of the caducous polygala has a checkerberry odor. Has the other?

It is midsummer, and, looking from the hills at midday, I see the waving blades of corn reflecting the light. The foliage of the trees looks green generally. The shrub oak leaves especially are not much injured, and the fields, though rather brown, are not so dry as I expected.

July 22. This morning, though perfectly fair except a haziness in the east, which prevented any splendor, the birds do not sing as yesterday. They appear to make distinctions which we cannot appreciate, and

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perhaps sing with most animation on the finest mornings.

1 P. M. — Lee's Bridge, *via* Conantum; return by Clematis Brook.

There men in the fields are at work thus indefatigably, more or less honestly getting bread for men. The writer should be employed with at least equal industry to an analogous though higher end.

Flocks of yellow-breasted, russet-backed female bobolinks are seen flitting stragglingly across the meadows. The bobolink loses his song as he loses his colors.

Tansy is now conspicuous by the roadsides, covered with small red butterflies. It is not an uninteresting plant. I probably put it down a little too early. Is that a slender bellflower with entire leaves by the Corner road? The green berries of the arum are seen, and the now *reddish* fruit of the trillium, and the round green-pea-sized green berries of the axil-flowering Solomon's-seal. Farmers have commenced their meadow-haying. The *Aster macrophyllus*, large-leafed, in Miles's Swamp. Is not that the *Lysimachia ciliata*, or hairy-stalked loosestrife, by the Corner road, not the *lanceolata*? *Eupatorium sessilifolium* now whitish. A strong west wind, saving us from intolerable heat, accompanied by a blue haze, making the mountains invisible. We have more of the furnace-like heat to-day, after all. The *Rhus glabra* flowers are covered with bees, *large* yellowish wasps, and butterflies; they are all alive with them. How much account insects make of some flowers! There are other botanists than I. The *Asclepias syriaca* is going to seed. Here is a kingfisher frequenting the

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Corner Brook Pond. They find out such places. Huckleberrying and blackberrying have commenced. The round-leafed sundew. *Monotropa uniflora*, Indian-pipe. *Solidago Canadensis* (?) almost out. Either a *smooth Polygonum hydropiperoides* or a white *P. amphibium* var. *terrestre*. The spear thistle.[1] *Galium circæzans*, wild liquorice, in Baker Farm Swamp.

What is that minute whitish flower with an upright thread-like stem and thread-like linear leaves, with a kind of interrupted spike or raceme of small, whitish, erect, bell-like flowers, the corolla divided by a stout partition, from which projects the style, with three distinct segments in the edge of the bell each side of the partition?[2] Also found a very small narrow-leaved whitish aster (?).[3]

July 23. P. M. — To Annursnack.

Herbage is drying up; even weeds are wilted, and the corn rolls. Agriculture is a good school in which to drill a man. Successful farming admits of no idling. Now is the haying season. How active must these men be, all the country over, that they may get through their work in season! A few spoiled windrows, all black and musty, have taught them that they must make hay while the sun shines, and get it in before it rains.

Much that I had taken to be the lanceolate loosestrife is the heart-leaved, especially by the Corner road. *Pycnanthemum muticum*, mountain mint. Have I not

[1] *Cirsium lanceolatum.* [2] Canada snapdragon.
[3] *Erigeron Canadensis.*

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mistaken this for the other species heretofore? The dwarf choke-cherry is ripe now, long before the rum cherry. Also the *Pyrus arbutifolia*. *Cnicus pumilus*,[1] pasture thistle. *Chenopodium hybridum*, maple-leaved goose-foot.

What is that white hairy plant with lanceolate leaves and racemes now, with flat burs, one to three, and a long spine in the midst, and five ovate calyx-leaves left (these turned to one side of the peduncle), burs very adhesive, close to road in meadow just beyond stone bridge on right; long out of bloom? Every man says his dog will not touch you. Look out, nevertheless.

Twenty minutes after seven, I sit at my window to observe the sun set. The lower clouds in the north and southwest grow gradually darker as the sun goes down, since we now see the side opposite to the sun, but those high overhead, whose under sides we see reflecting the day, are light. The small clouds low in the western sky were at first dark also, but, as the sun descends, they are lit up and aglow all but their cores. Those in the east, though we see their sunward sides, are a dark blue, presaging night, only the highest faintly glowing. A roseate redness, clear as amber, suffuses the low western sky about the sun, in which the small clouds are mostly melted, only their golden edges still revealed. The atmosphere there is like some kinds of wine, perchance, or molten cinnabar, if that is red, in which also all kinds of pearls and precious stones are melted. Clouds generally near the horizon, except near the sun, are now a dark blue. (The sun sets.) It is half past seven.

[1] *Cirsium pumilum.*

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The roseate glow deepens to purple. The low western sky is now, and has been for some minutes, a splendid map, where the fancy can trace islands, continents, and cities beyond compare. The glow forsakes the high eastern clouds; the uppermost clouds in the west now darken, the glow having forsaken them too; they become a dark blue, and anon their under sides reflect a deep red, like heavy damask curtains, after they had already been dark. The general redness gradually fades into a pale reddish tinge in the horizon, with a clear white light above it, in which the clouds grow more conspicuous and darker and darker blue, appearing to follow in the wake of the sun, and it is now a quarter to eight, or fifteen minutes after sunset, twenty-five minutes from the first. A quarter of an hour later, or half an hour after sunset, the white light grows cream-colored above the increasing horizon redness, passing through white into blue above. The western clouds, high and low, are now dark fuscous, not dark blue, but the eastern clouds are not so dark as the western. Now, about twenty minutes after the first glow left the clouds above the sun's place, there is a second faint fuscous or warm brown glow on the edges of the dark clouds there, sudden and distinct, and it fades again, and it is early starlight, but the tops of the eastern clouds still are white, reflecting the day. The cream-color grows more yellowish or amber. About three quarters of an hour after sunset the evening red is deepest, *i. e.* a general atmospheric redness close to the west horizon. There is more of it, after all, than I expected, for the day has been clear and rather

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cool, and the evening red is what was the blue haze by day. The moon, now in her first quarter, now begins to preside, — her light to prevail, — though for the most part eclipsed by clouds. As the light in the west fades, the sky there, seen between the clouds, has a singular clarity and serenity.

July 24. The cardinal-flower probably open to-day. The quails are heard whistling this morning near the village.

It would be well if the false preacher of Christianity were always met and balked by a superior, more living and elastic faith in his audience; just as some missionaries in India are balked by the easiness with which the Hindoos believe every word of the miracles and prophecies, being only surprised "that they are so much less wonderful than those of their own scripture, which also they implicitly believe."

3.30 P. M. — To Goose Pond.

Is that slender narrow-leaved weed which is just coming into flower everywhere the *Erigeron Canadensis* which has spread so far and wide? Not only blue-curls but wormwood, both aromatic herbs, are seen preparing for their reign: the former a few inches high now over all fields, which has reserved itself so long; and most do not recognize it, but you stoop and pluck it and are thankful for the reminiscence of autumn which its aroma affords; the latter, still larger, shows itself on all compost-heaps and in all gardens, where the chenopodium and amaranth are already rank. I sympathize with weeds perhaps more than with the crop they choke,

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they express so much vigor. They are the truer crop which the earth more willingly bears. The ground is very dry, the berries are drying up. It is long since we have had any rain to speak of. Gardeners use the watering-pot. The sere and fallen leaves of the birches in many places redden the ground; this heat and drouth have the effect of autumn to some extent. The smooth sumach berries are red. However, there is a short, fresh green on the shorn fields, the aftermath. When the first crop of grass is off, and the aftermath springs, the year has passed its culmination.

7 P. M. — To the hills by Abel Hosmer's.

How dusty the roads! Wagons, chaises, loads of barrels, etc., all drive into the dust and are lost. The dust now, looking toward the sun, is white and handsome like a vapor in the morning, curling round the head and load of the teamster, while his dog walks obscured in it under the wagon. Even this dust is to one at a distance an agreeable object.

I heard this afternoon the cool water twitter of the goldfinch, and saw the bird. They come with the springing aftermath. It is refreshing as a cup of cold water to a thirsty man to hear them, now only one at a time. Walden has fallen about six inches from where it was a month or so ago. I found, by wading out on the bar, that it had been about six feet higher than the lowest stage I have known.

Just after sunrise this morning I noticed Hayden walking beside his team, which was slowly drawing a heavy hewn stone swung under the axle, surrounded

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by an atmosphere of industry, his day's work begun. Honest, peaceful industry, conserving the world, which all men respect, which society has consecrated. A reproach to all sluggards and idlers. Pausing abreast the shoulders of his oxen and half turning round, with a flourish of his merciful whip, while they gained their length on him. And I thought, such is the labor which the American Congress exists to protect, — honest, manly toil. His brow has commenced to sweat. Honest as the day is long. One of the sacred band doing the needful but irksome drudgery. Toil that makes his bread taste sweet, and keeps society sweet. The day went by, and at evening I passed a rich man's yard, who keeps many servants and foolishly spends much money while he adds nothing to the common stock, and there I saw Hayden's stone lying beside a whimsical structure intended to adorn this Lord Timothy Dexter's mansion, and the dignity forthwith departed from Hayden's labor, in my eyes.[1] I am frequently invited to survey farms in a rude manner, a very [*sic*] and insignificant labor, though I manage to get more out of it than my employers; but I am never invited by the community to do anything quite worth the while to do. How much of the industry of the boor, traced to the end, is found thus to be subserving some rich man's foolish enterprise! There is a coarse, boisterous, money-making fellow in the north part of the town who is going to build a bank wall under the hill along the edge of his meadow. The powers have put this into his head to keep him out of mischief, and he wishes

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 457, 458; *Misc.*, Riv. 256, 257.]

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me to spend three weeks digging there with him. The result will be that he will perchance get a little more money to hoard, or leave for his heirs to spend foolishly when he is dead. Now, if I do this, the community will commend me as an industrious and hard-working man; but, as I choose to devote myself to labors which yield more real profit, though but little money, they regard me as a loafer. But, as I do not need this police of meaningless labor to regulate me, and do not see anything absolutely praiseworthy in his undertaking, however amusing it may be to him, I prefer to finish my education at a different school.[1]

The corn now forms solid phalanxes, though the ears have not set, and, the sun going down, the shadows, even of corn-fields, fall long over the meadows, and a sweetness comes up from the shaven grass, and the crickets creak more loud in the new-springing grass. Just after sunset I notice that a thin veil of clouds, far in the east, beyond the nearer and heavier dark-gray masses, glows a fine rose-color, like the inner bark or lining of some evergreens. The clear, solemn western sky till far into night was framed by a dark line of clouds with a heavy edge, curving across the northwest sky, at a considerable height, separating the region of day from that of night. Lay on a lichen-covered hill which looked white in the moonlight.

July 25. 4 A. M. — To Cliffs.

This early twitter or breathing of chip-birds in the dawn sounds like something organic in the earth. This

[1] [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 456, 457; *Misc.*, Riv. 255, 256.]

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is a morning celebrated by birds. Our bluebird sits on the peak of the house and warbles as in the spring, but as he does not now by day. This morning is all the more glorious for a white fog, which, though not universal, is still very extensive over all lowlands, some fifty feet high or more, though there was none at ten last night. There are white cobwebs on the grass. The battalions of the fog are continually on the move.

How hardy are cows that lie in the fog chewing the cud all night! They wake up with no stiffness in their limbs. They are indifferent to fogs as frogs to water; like hippopotami, fitted are they to dwell ever on the river bank of this world, fitted to meadows and their vicissitudes. I see where, in pastures of short, firm turf, they have pulled up the grass by the roots, and it lies scattered in small tufts. To anticipate a little, when I return this way I find two farmers loading their cart with dirt, and they are so unmanly as to excuse themselves to me for working this Sunday morning by saying with a serious face that they are burying a cow which died last night after some months of sickness, — which, however, they unthinkingly admit that they killed last night, being the most convenient time for them, and I see that they are now putting more loads of soil over her body to save the manure. How often men will betray their sense of guilt, and hence their actual guilt, by their excuses, where no guilt necessarily was. I remarked that it must be cold for a cow lying in such fogs all night, but one answered, properly, "Well, I don't know how it may be with a sick cow, but it won't hurt a well critter any."

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The ditch stonecrop is abundant in the now dry pool by the roadside near Hubbard's.

From Fair Haven Hill, the sun having risen, I see great wreaths of fog far northeast, revealing the course of the river, a noble sight, as it were the river elevated, or rather the ghost of the ample stream that once flowed to ocean between these now distant uplands in another geological period, filling the broad meadows, — the dews saved to the earth by this great Musketaquid condenser, refrigerator. And now the rising sun makes glow with downiest white the ample wreaths, which rise higher than the highest trees. The farmers that lie slumbering on this their day of rest, how little do they know of this stupendous pageant! The bright, fresh aspect of the woods glistening with moisture when the early sun falls on them. (As I came along, the whole earth resounded with the crowing of cocks, from the eastern unto the western horizon, and as I passed a yard, I saw a white rooster on the topmost rail of a fence pouring forth his challenges for destiny to come on. This salutation was travelling round the world; some six hours since had resounded through England, France, and Spain; then the sun passed over a belt of silence where the Atlantic flows, except a clarion here and there from some cooped-up cock upon the waves, till greeted with a general all-hail along the Atlantic shore.) Looking now from the rocks, the fog is a perfect sea over the great Sudbury meadows in the southwest, commencing at the base of this Cliff and reaching to the hills south of Wayland, and further still to Framingham, through which only the tops of the higher

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hills are seen as islands, great bays of the sea, many miles across, where the largest fleets would find ample room and in which countless farms and farmhouses are immersed. The fog rises highest over the channel of the river and over the ponds in the woods which are thus revealed. I clearly distinguish where White Pond lies by this sign, and various other ponds, methinks, to which I have walked ten or twelve miles distant, and I distinguish the course of the Assabet far in the west and southwest beyond the woods. Every valley is densely packed with the downy vapor. What levelling on a great scale is done thus for the eye! The fog rises to the top of Round Hill in the Sudbury meadows, whose sunburnt yellow grass makes it look like a low sand-bar in the ocean, and I can judge thus pretty accurately what hills are higher than this by their elevation above the surface of the fog. Every meadow and watercourse makes an arm of this bay. The primeval banks make thus a channel which only the fogs of late summer and autumn fill. The Wayland hills make a sort of promontory or peninsula like some Nahant. As I look across thither, I think of the sea monsters that swim in that sea and of the wrecks that strew the bottom, many fathom deep, where, in an hour, when this sea dries up, farms will smile and farmhouses be revealed. A certain thrilling vastness or wasteness it now suggests. This is one of those ambrosial, white, ever-memorable fogs presaging fair weather. It produces the most picturesque and grandest effects as it rises, and travels hither and thither, enveloping and concealing trees and forests and hills. It is lifted up

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now into quite a little white mountain over Fair Haven Bay, and, even on its skirts, only the tops of the highest pines are seen above it, and all adown the river it has an uneven outline like a rugged mountain ridge; in one place some rainbow tints, and far, far in the south horizon, near the further verge of the sea (over Saxonville?) it is heaved up into great waves, as if there were breakers there. In the meanwhile the wood thrush and the jay and the robin sing around me here, and birds are heard singing from the midst of the fog. And in one short hour this sea will all evaporate and the sun be reflected from farm windows on its green bottom.

It is a rare music, the earliest bee's hum amid the flowers, revisiting the flower-bells just after sunrise.

Of flowers observed before June 11th the following I know or think to be still in blossom, *viz.*:—

Stellaria media
Shepherd's-purse
Potentilla Canadensis [1]
} probably

Columbine?
Hedyotis
Grasses and sedges
Sorrel? ?
Trifolium procumbens, yellow clover
Celandine
Red clover } in favorable moist
Tall crowfoot } and shady places
Forget-me-not, common
Hypoxis erecta
Blue-eyed grass, scarce
Sarracenia? ? [2]

Nuphars, both not numerous
Ranunculus Purshii? ?
Ribwort
Cotton-grass, common
Rubus Canadensis?
Cistus, very scarce
Canada snapdragon
Potentilla argentea, not very common?
Whiteweed, may be here and there
White clover
Meadow-rue, very common
High blackberry?
Bitter-sweet, still
Yarrow, very common
Knawel?
Utricularia vulgaris?

[1] [Two interrogation points in pencil here.] [2] No petals?

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Gone out of blossom since June 10th (of those observed after June 10th before June 24th) the following:—

Iris versicolor
Broom-rape?
Fumaria?
Viburnums
Dracæna
Carrion-flower
Cornels
Silene antirrhina??
Erigeron strigosus
Waxwork?
Large purple orchises
Hound's-tongue?
Tufted loosestrife
Four-leaved loosestrife??
A veronica
Aralia hispida
Grape-vines
Moss rose and early straight-thorned (?)
Pyrolas?
Swamp-pink? may linger somewhere
Prinos lævigatus
Pogonia?
Iris Virginica
Elder?
Mitchella?
Diervilla
Mountain laurel
Sweet-briar

Of those observed between June 10th and 24th the following are still *common*:—

Marsh speedwell
Floating-heart
Mullein
Dogsbane
Cow-wheat
Butter-and-eggs
Prunella
Epilobium
Some or most galiums

July 26. By my intimacy with nature I find myself withdrawn from man. My interest in the sun and the moon, in the morning and the evening, compels me to solitude.

The grandest picture in the world is the sunset sky. In your higher moods what man is there to meet? You are of necessity isolated. The mind that perceives clearly any natural beauty is in that instant withdrawn

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from human society. My desire for society is infinitely increased; my fitness for any actual society is diminished.

Went to Cambridge and Boston to-day. Dr. Harris says that my great moth is the *Attacus luna;* may be regarded as one of several emperor moths. They are rarely seen, being very liable to be snapped up by birds. Once, as he was crossing the College Yard, he saw the wings of one coming down, which reached the ground just at his feet. What a tragedy! The wings came down as the only evidence that such a creature had soared, — wings large and splendid, which were designed to bear a precious burthen through the upper air. So most poems, even epics, are like the wings come down to earth, while the poet whose adventurous flight they evidence has been snapped up [by] the ravenous vulture of this world. If this moth ventures abroad by day, some bird will pick out the precious cargo and let the sails and rigging drift, as when the sailor meets with a floating spar and sail and reports a wreck seen in a certain latitude and longitude. For what were such tender and defenseless organizations made? The one I had, being put into a large box, beat itself — its wings, etc. — all to pieces in the night, in its efforts to get out, depositing its eggs, nevertheless, on the sides of its prison. Perchance the entomologist never saw an entire specimen, but, as he walked one day, the wings of a larger species than he had ever seen came fluttering down. The wreck of an argosy in the air.

He tells me the glow-worms are first seen, he thinks, in the last part of August. Also that there is a large

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and brilliant glow-worm found here, more than an inch long, as he measured it to me on his finger, but rare.

Perhaps the sunset glows are sudden in proportion as the edges of the clouds are abrupt, when the sun finally reaches such a point that his rays can be reflected from them.

At 10 P. M. I see high columns of fog, formed in the lowlands and lit by the moon, preparing to charge this higher ground. It is as if the sky reached the solid ground there, for they shut out the woods.

July 27. Tuesday. 4 P. M. — To Assabet behind Lee place.

It is pleasing to behold at this season contrasted shade and sunshine on the side of neighboring hills. They are not so attractive to the eye when all in the shadow of a cloud or wholly open to the sunshine. Each must enhance the other.

That the luxury of walking in the river may be perfect it must be very warm, such as are few days even in July, so that the breeze on those parts of the body that have just been immersed may not produce the least chilliness. It cannot be too warm, so that, with a shirt to fend the sun from your back, you may walk with perfect indifference, or rather with equal pleasure, alternately in deep and in shallow water. Both water and air must be unusually warm; otherwise we shall feel no impulse to cast ourselves into and remain in the stream. To-day it is uncomfortably cool for such a walk. It is very pleasant to walk up and down the stream, however, studying the further bank, which is six

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or seven feet high and completely covered with verdure of various kinds. I observe grape-vines with green clusters almost fully grown hanging over the water, and hazelnut husks are fully formed and are richly, autumnally, significant. *Viburnum dentatum*, elder, and red-stemmed cornel, all with an abundance of green berries, help clothe the bank, and the *Asclepias incarnata* and meadow-rue fill the crevices. Above all there is the cardinal-flower just opened, close to the water's edge, remarkable for its intense scarlet color, contrasting with the surrounding green.

I see young breams in small schools, only one inch long, light-colored and semitransparent as yet, long in proportion to their depth. Some two inches long are ludicrously deep already, like little halibuts, making the impression, by their form, of vast size like halibuts or whales. They appear to be attended and guarded still by their parents. What innumerable enemies they have to encounter!

The sun on the bottom is indispensable, and you must have your back to it.

Woodcocks have been common by the streams and springs in woods for some weeks.

Aster dumosus (?) by wood-paths.

A quarter before seven P. M. — To Cliffs.

It has been a clear, cool, breezy day for the season. There is only one white bar of cloud in the north. I now perceive the peculiar scent of the corn-fields. The corn is just high enough, and this hour is favorable. I should think the ears had hardly set yet. Half an hour before sundown, you perceive the cool, damp air in

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valleys surrounded by woods, where dew is already formed.

I am sure that if I call for a companion in my walk I have relinquished in my design some closeness of communion with Nature. The walk will surely be more commonplace. The inclination for society indicates a distance from Nature. I do not design so wild and mysterious a walk.

The bigoted and sectarian forget that without religion or devotion of some kind nothing great was ever accomplished.

On Fair Haven Hill. The slight distraction of picking berries is favorable to a mild, abstracted, poetic mood, to sequestered or transcendental thinking. I return ever more fresh to my mood from such slight interruptions.

All the clouds in the sky are now close to the west horizon, so that the sun is nearly down before they are reached and lighted or gilded. Wachusett, free of clouds, has a fine purplish tinge, as if the juice of grapes had been squeezed over it, darkening into blue. I hear the scratching sound of a worm at work in this hardwood-pile on which I sit.

We are most disturbed by the sun's dazzle when it is lowest. Now the upper edge of that low blue bank is gilt where the sun has disappeared, leaving a glory in the horizon through which a few cloudy peaks send raylike shadows. Now a slight rosy blush is spreading north and south over the horizon sky and tingeing a few small scattered clouds in the east. A blue tinge southward makes the very edge of the earth there a moun-

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tain. That low bank of cloud in the west is now exactly the color of the mountains, a dark blue. We should think sacredly, with devotion. That is one thing, at least, we may do magnanimously. May not every man have some private affair which he can conduct greatly, unhurriedly? The river is silvery, as it were plated and polished smooth, with the slightest possible tinge of gold, to-night. How beautiful the meanders of a river, thus revealed! How beautiful hills and vales, the whole surface of the earth a succession of these great cups, falling away from dry or rocky edges to gelid green meadows and water in the midst, where night already is setting in! The thrush, now the sun is apparently set, fails not to sing. Have I heard the veery lately? All glow on the clouds is gone, except from one higher, small, rosy pink or flesh-colored isle. The sun is now probably set. There are no clouds on high to reflect a golden light into the river.

How cool and assuaging the thrush's note after the fever of the day! I doubt if they have anything so richly wild in Europe. So long a civilization must have banished it. It will only be heard in America, perchance, while our star is in the ascendant. I should be very much surprised if I were to hear in the strain of the nightingale such unexplored wildness and fertility, reaching to sundown, inciting to emigration. Such a bird must itself have emigrated long ago. Why, then, was I born in America? I might ask.

I should like to ask the assessors what is the value of that blue mountain range in the northwest horizon to Concord, and see if they would laugh or seriously

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set about calculating it. How poor, comparatively, should we be without it! It would be descending to the scale of the merchant to say it is worth its weight in gold. The privilege of beholding it, as an ornament, a suggestion, a provocation, a heaven on earth. If I were one of the fathers of the town I would not sell this right which we now enjoy for all the merely material wealth and prosperity conceivable. If need were, we would rather all go down together.

The huckleberry-bird as usual, and the nighthawk squeaks and booms, and the bullfrog trumps, just before the earliest star. The evening red is much more remarkable than the morning red. The solemnity of the evening sky! I turn round, and there shines the moon, silvering the small clouds which have gathered; she makes nothing red.

New creaking or shrilling from crickets (?) for a long time past, more fine and piercing than the other. *Aster dumosus* (?) by wood-paths.

July 28. P. M. — To Yellow Pine Lake.

Epilobium coloratum, roadside just this side of Dennis's. Water lobelia, is it, that C. shows me? There is a yellowish light now from a low, tufted, yellowish, broad-leaved grass, in fields that have been mown. A June-like, breezy air. The large shaped sagittaria out, a large crystalline-white three-petalled flower. Enough has not been said of the beauty of the shrub oak leaf (*Quercus ilicifolia*), of a thick, firm texture, for the most part uninjured by insects, intended to last all winter; of a glossy green above

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The Mountains from Ponkawtasset Hill

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and now silky downy beneath, fit for a wreath or crown. The leaves of the chinquapin oak might be intermixed. Grasshoppers are very abundant, several to every square foot in some fields. I observed some leaves of woodbine which had not risen from the ground, turned a beautiful bright red, perhaps from heat and drought, though it was in a low wood. This *Ampelopsis quinquefolia* is in blossom. Is it identical with that about R. W. E.'s posts, which was in blossom July 13th? *Aster Radula* (?) in J. P. Brown's meadow. *Solidago altissima* (?) beyond the Corner Bridge, out some days at least, but not rough-hairy. Goldenrod and asters have *fairly* begun; *i. e.* there are several kinds of each out. What is that slender hieracium or aster-like plant in woods on Corner road with lanceolate, coarsely feather-veined leaves, sessile and remotely toothed; minute, clustered, imbricate buds (?) or flowers and buds? Panicled hieracium?[1]

The evenings are now sensibly longer, and the cooler weather makes them improvable.

July 29. P. M. — To Burnt Plain.

The forget-me-not still by the brook. Floating-heart was very common yesterday in J. P. Brown's woodland pond. *Gaultheria procumbens* in bloom on this year's plants. The *Mitchella repens* shows small green fruit, and the trientalis is gone to seed, black in a small white globule. *Proserpinaca palustris* for how long? *Euphorbia maculata* how long? I see a bluet still in damp ground. Apples now by their size remind me of

[1] Yes.

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the harvest. I see a few roses in moist places with short curved thorns and narrow bracts. *Eupatorium perfoliatum* just beginning. The *Ranunculus repens* var. *filiformis* is still very abundant on the river-shore. I see a geranium leaf turned red in the shade of a copse; the same color with the woodbine seen yesterday. These leaves interest me as much as flowers. I should like to have a complete list of those that are the first to turn red or yellow. How attractive is color, especially red; kindred this with the color of fruits in the harvest and skies in the evening. The colors which some rather obscure leaves assume in the fall in dark copses or by the roadside, for the most part unobserved, interest me more than their flowers. There is also that plant with a lake or claret under side to its radical leaves in early spring. What is that?[1]

It did me good this afternoon to see the large soft-looking roots of alders occupying a small brook in a narrow shady swamp, laid bare at a distance from their base, covered with white warts sometimes on a green ground. With what rapacity they grasped, with what tenacity they held to life! also filling the wet soil with innumerable fibres, ready to resist the severest drought.

Blue-curls and wormwood springing up everywhere, with their aroma, — especially the first, — are quite restorative. It is time we had a little wormwood to flavor the somewhat tasteless or cloying summer, which palls upon the taste. That common rigid narrow-leaved faint-purplish aster in dry woods by shrub oak paths, *Aster linariifolius* of Bigelow, but it is not *savory-*

[1] *Aster undulatus?*

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leaved. I do not find it in Gray. *Lespedeza violacea*, is that under Fair Haven? It must have been out a week. Can that be *Hypericum mutilum* grown so high in Potter's low field? That is apparently *Solidago nemoralis* in dry fields. *Lechea minor?*

It is commonly said that history is a history of war, but it is at the same time a history of development. Savage nations — any of our Indian tribes, for instance — would have enough stirring incidents in their annals, wars and murders enough, surely, to make interesting anecdotes without end, such a chronicle of startling and monstrous events as fill the daily papers and suit the appetite of barrooms; but the annals of such a tribe do not furnish the materials for history.

July 30. The fore part of this month was the warmest weather we have had; the last part, sloping toward autumn, has reflected some of its coolness, for we are very forward to anticipate the fall. Perhaps I may say the spring culminated with the commencement of haying, and the summer side of the year in mid-July.

3.30 P. M. — To Flint's Pond.

How long is it since I heard a veery? Do they go, or become silent, when the goldfinch heralds the autumn? Do not all flowers that blossom after mid-July remind us of the fall? After midsummer we have a belated feeling as if we had all been idlers, and are forward to see in each sight and hear in each sound some presage of the fall, just as in middle age man anticipates the end of life. Tansy is a prevalent flower now; dogsbane still common. Nighthawks squeak and

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fly low over Thrush Alley at 4 P. M. A small purple orchis (*Platanthera psycodes*), quite small, so that I perceive what I called by this name before must have been the *fimbriata*. The sand cherry is a handsome fruit but not very palatable. *Hedeoma pulegioides*, pennyroyal, is out of bloom apparently for some time; in the ruts of an old path through a copse. *Lobelia Dortmanna*, water lobelia, apparently for some time. A small kind of potamogeton which I have not examined before, most like the *P. hybridus*, but with a cylindrical spike.

The ripple-marks on the east shore of Flint's are nearly parallel firm ridges in the white sand, one inch or more apart. They are very distinctly felt by the naked feet of the wader. What are those remarkable spherical masses of fine grass or fibres looking like the nests of water mice, washing toward the shore at the bottom amid the weeds? Quite numerous over a long shore. I thought they must be nests of mice till I found some solid.

The *Clethra alnifolia* is just beginning, — as the swamp-pink shows its last white petals, — but August will have its beauty. It is important as one of the later flowers. High blackberries ripe, apparently for a day or two. That succulent plant by Tuttle's sluice appears to be *Sedum Telephium*, garden orpine, or live-forever, called also house-leek, since it will grow if only one end is tucked under a shingle.

What a gem is a bird's egg, especially a blue or a green one, when you see one broken or whole in the woods! I noticed a small blue egg this afternoon washed up by Flint's Pond and half buried by white

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sand, and as it lay there, alternately wet and dry, no color could be fairer, no gem could have a more advantageous or favorable setting. Probably it was shaken out of some nest which overhung the water. I frequently meet with broken egg-shells where a crow, perchance, or some other thief has been marauding. And is not that shell something very precious that houses that winged life?

Caught in a thunder-shower, when south of Flint's Pond. Came back by C. Smith's road. Stood under thick trees. I care not how hard it rains, if it does not rain more than fifteen minutes. I can shelter myself effectually in the woods. It is a grand sound, that of the rain on the leaves of the forest a quarter of a mile distant, approaching. But I got wet through, after all, being caught where there were no trees.

July 31. P. M. — To Assabet over Nawshawtuct.

There is more shadow under the edges of woods and copses now. The foliage appears to have increased so that the shadows are heavier, and perhaps it is this that makes it cooler, especially morning and evening, though it may be as warm as ever at noon. Saw but one *Lysimachia stricta* left in the meadows, the meadow-sweet meadows. The green cranberries are half formed. The absence of flowers, the shadows, the wind, the green cranberries, etc., are autumnal. The river has risen a foot or so since its lowest early in the month. The water is quite cool. Methinks it cannot be so warm again this year. After that torrid season the river rises in the first rains and is much cooled.

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The springs are mostly buried on its shore. The high blueberry has a singularly cool flavor. The alder locust again reminds me of autumn. Can that low blackberry which has, I think, a rather wrinkled leaf and bears dense masses of lively berries now, commonly in cool moist ground, be the same with the common? *Eupatorium purpureum* has just begun, and probably the *ovate*, etc., but I suspect no entire corymb is out.

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IV

AUGUST, 1852

(ÆT. 35)

Aug. 1. P. M. — To Conantum.

Is not that the small-flowered hypericum? The berries of what I have called the alternate-leaved cornel are now ripe, a very dark blue — blue-black — and round, but dropping off prematurely, leaving handsome *red* cymes, which adorn the trees from a distance. *Chelone glabra* just out. Singing birds are scarce. I have not heard the catbird or the thrush for a long time. The peawai sings yet. *Early* apples are ripe, and the sopsivine scents my handkerchief before I have perceived any odor from the orchards.[1] The small rough sunflower (*Helianthus divaricatus*) tells of August heats; also *Helianthus annuus*, common sunflower. May it not stand for the character of August? Found a long, dense spike of the *Orchis psycodes*. Much later this than the great orchis. The same, only smaller and denser, not high-colored enough.

Aug. 2. At 5.30 this morning, saw from Nawshawtuct the trees on the Great Meadows against and rising out of the dispersing wreaths of fog, on which the sun was shining.

Just before sunset. At the window. — The clear sky

[1] [See *Excursions*, p. 295; Riv. 362.]

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in the west, the sunset window, has a cloud both above and below. The edges of these clouds about the sun glow golden, running into fuscous. A dark shower is vanishing in the southeast. There will commonly be a window in the west. The sun enters the low cloud, but still is reflected brightly, though more brassily perhaps, from the edges of the upper cloud. There is as yet no redness in the heavens. Now the glow becomes redder, tingeing new edges of the clouds near and higher up the sky, as they were dipped in an invisible reddening stream of light, into a rosy bath. Far in the southwest, along the horizon, is now the fairer rose-tinted or flesh-colored sky, the west being occupied by a dark cloud mainly, and, still further south, a huge boulder shines like a chalk cliff tinged with pink. The rear of the departing shower is blushing.

Before this, at 2 P. M., walked to Burnt Plain.

I do not remember to have heard tree-toads for a long time. We have had a day or two (and here is another) of hanging clouds, not threatening rain, yet affording shade, so that you are but little incommoded by the sun in a long walk. Varied dark and downy cumulus, fair-weather clouds, well-nigh covering the sky, with dark bases and white glowing fronts and brows. You see the blue sky on every side between clouds. Is this peculiar to this season, early August? The whole cope equally divided into sky and cloud. Merely a rich drapery in the sky. Arras or curtains to adorn the gorgeous days. The midday is very silent. *Trichostema dichotomum* just out. The common St. John's-wort is now scarce. The reddening sumach

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berries are of rare beauty. Are they crimson or vermilion? Some sumach leaves, where the stem has broken, have turned red. Blue-eyed grass lingers still. Is the dodder out of bloom, or merely budded? It is a new era with the flowers when the small purple fringed orchis, as now, is found in shady swamps standing along the brooks. It appears to be alone of its class. Not to be overlooked, it has so much flower, though not so high-colored as the arethusa. Together with the side-flowering skull-cap, etc. The arethusas, pogonias, calopogons all gone, and violets of all kinds.

We had a little rain after all, but I walked through a long alder copse, where the leafy tops of the alders spread like umbrellas over my head, and heard the harmless pattering of the rain on my roof.

Wachusett from Fair Haven Hill looks like this: —

the dotted line being the top of the surrounding forest. Even on the low principle that misery loves company and is relieved by the consciousness that it is shared by many, and therefore is not so insignificant and trivial, after all, this blue mountain outline is valuable. In many moods it is cheering to look across hence to that blue rim of the earth, and be reminded of the invisible towns and communities, for the most part also unremembered, which lie in the further and deeper hollows between me and those hills. Towns of sturdy uplandish fame, where some of the morning and primal vigor still lingers, I trust. Ashburnham, Rindge,

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Jaffrey, etc., — it is cheering to think that it is with such communities that we survive or perish. Yes, the mountains do thus impart, in the mere prospect of them, some of the New Hampshire vigor. The melancholy man who had come forth to commit suicide on this hill might be saved by being thus reminded how many brave and contented lives are lived between him and the horizon. Those hills extend our plot of earth; they make our native valley or indentation in the earth so much the larger. There is a whitish line along the base of Wachusett more particularly, as if the reflection of bare cliffs there in the sun. Undoubtedly it is the slight vaporous haze in the atmosphere seen edgewise just above the top of the forest, though it is a clear day. It, this line, makes the mountains loom, in fact, a faint whitish line separating the mountains from their bases and the rest of the globe.

Aug. 3. The *Hypericum Sarothra* appears to be out.

12 M. At the east window. — A temperate noon. I hear a cricket creak in the shade; also the sound of a distant piano. The music reminds me of imagined heroic ages; it suggests such ideas of human life and the field which the earth affords as the few noblest passages of poetry. Those few interrupted strains which reach me through the trees suggest the same thoughts and aspirations that all melody, by whatever sense appreciated, has ever done. I am affected. What coloring variously fair and intense our life admits of! How a thought will mould and paint it! Impressed by some vague vision,

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as it were, elevated into a more glorious sphere of life, we no longer know this, we can deny its existence. We say we are enchanted, perhaps. But what I am impressed by is the fact that this enchantment is no delusion. So far as truth is concerned, it is a fact such as what we *call* our actual existence, but it is a far higher and more glorious fact. It is evidence of such a sphere, of such possibilities. It is its truth and reality that affect me. A thrumming of piano-strings beyond the gardens and through the elms. At length the melody steals into my being. I know not when it began to occupy me. By some fortunate coincidence of thought or circumstance I am attuned to the universe, I am fitted to hear, my being moves in a sphere of melody, my fancy and imagination are excited to an inconceivable degree. This is no longer the dull earth on which I stood. It is possible to live a grander life here; already the steed is stamping, the knights are prancing; already our thoughts bid a proud farewell to the so-called actual life and its humble glories. Now this is the verdict of a soul in health. But the soul diseased says that its own vision and life alone is true and sane. What a different aspect will courage put upon the face of things! This suggests what a perpetual flow of spirit would produce.

Of course, no man was ever made so truly generous, was so expanded by any vile draught, but that he might be equally and more expanded by imbibing a saner and wholesomer draught than ever he has swallowed. There is a wine that does not intoxicate; there is a pure juice of the grape, and unfermented. What kind of draught is that which the aspirant soul imbibes?

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In every part of Great Britain are discovered the traces of the Romans,—their funereal urns, their lamps, their roads, their dwellings. But New England, at least, is not based on any Roman ruins. We have not to lay the foundation of our houses in the ashes of a former civilization.

P. M. — To Boulder Field.

Vernonia Noveboracensis, iron-weed, by Flint's Bridge, began to open by July 31st; a tall plant with a broad fastigiate corymb of rich dark-purple thistle-like flowers, the middle ones opening first. Saw two hay-carts and teams cross the shallow part of the river in front of N. Barrett's, empty, to the Great Meadows. An interesting sight. The Great Meadows alive with farmers getting their hay. I could count four or five great loads already loaded in different parts. *Clematis Virginiana* just begun. Observed a low prostrate veronica with roundish, regularly opposite leaves, somewhat crenulate, and white flowers veined with purple, in damp, cool grass. Think I have not seen it before. A houstonia still. The huckleberries in the low ground by the river beyond Flint's are large and fresh. The black shine as with a gloss, and the blue are equally large.

Looking down into the singular bare hollows from the back of hill near here, the paths made by the cows in the sides of the hills, going round the hollows, made gracefully curving lines in the landscape, ribbing it. The curves, both the rising and falling of the path and its winding to right and left, are agreeable.

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What remarkable customs still prevail at funerals! The chief mourner, though it may be a maiden who has lost her lover, consents to be made a sort of puppet and is by them put forward to walk behind the corpse in the street, before the eyes of all, at a time which should be sacred to grief; is, beside, compelled, as it were, to attend to the coarse and unfeeling, almost inevitably to her impertinent, words of consolation or admonition, so called, of whatever clerical gentleman may be in the neighborhood. Friends and neighbors of the family should bury their dead. It is fitting that they should walk in procession with parade and even assumed solemnity. It is for them to pay this kind of respect to the dead, that it be not left to hirelings alone. It is soothing to the feelings of the absent mourners. They may fitly listen to the words of the preacher, but the feelings of the mourners should be respected.

Spergularia rubra, spurry sandwort, a pretty, minute red flower spreading flat by roadside, nearly out of blossom. Apparently *Urtica dioica*, but not very stinging, may have been out some time. *Hypericum mutilum*, probably last part of July.

Took that interesting view from one of the boulder rocks toward Lincoln Hills, between Hubbard's Hill and Grove and Barrett's, whose back or north and wooded side is in front, a few oaks and elms in front and on the right, and some fine boulders slumbering in the foreground. It is a peculiar part of the town, — the old bridle-road plains further east. A great tract here of unimproved and unfrequented country, the boulders sometimes crowned with barberry bushes. I hear

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crows, the robin, huckleberry-birds, young bluebirds, etc.

The sun coming out of a cloud and shining brightly on patches of cudweed reminds me of frost on the grass in the morning. A splendid entire rainbow after a slight shower, with two reflections of it, outermost broad red, passing through yellow to green, then narrow red, then blue or indigo (not plain what), then faint red again. It is too remarkable to be remarked on.

Aug. 4. To Walden by poorhouse road.

Have had a gentle rain, and now with a lowering sky, but still I hear the cricket. He seems to chirp from a new depth toward autumn, new *lieferungs* of the fall. The singular thought-inducing stillness after a gentle rain like this. It has allayed all excitement. I hear the singular watery twitter of the goldfinch, *ter tweeter e et* or *e ee*, as it ricochets over, he and his russet (?) female. The chirp of the constant chip-bird and the plaintive strain of the lark, also. I must make a list of those birds which, like the lark and the robin, if they do not stay all the year, are heard to sing longest of those that migrate. The bobolink and thrasher, etc., are silent. English-haying is long since done, only meadow-haying going on now. I smell the fragrant life-everlasting, now almost out; another scent that reminds me of the autumn. The little bees have gone to sleep amid the clethra blossoms in the rain and are not yet aroused. What is that weed somewhat like wormwood and amaranth on the ditch by roadside

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here?[1] What the vine now budded like clematis in the wall? Most huckleberries and blueberries and low blackberries are in their prime now.

A pleasant time to behold a small lake in the woods is in the intervals of a gentle rain-storm at this season, when the air and water are perfectly still, but the sky still overcast; first, because the lake is very smooth at such a time, second, as the atmosphere is so shallow and contracted, being low-roofed with clouds, the lake as a lower heaven is much larger in proportion to it. With its glassy reflecting surface, it is somewhat more heavenly and more full of light than the regions of the air above it. There is a pleasing vista southward over and through a wide indentation in the hills which form its shore, where their opposite sides slope to each other so as to suggest a stream flowing from it in that direction through a wooded valley, toward some distant blue hills in Sudbury and Framingham, Goodman's and Nobscot; that is, you look over and between the low near and green hills to the distant, which are tinged with blue, the heavenly color. Such is what is fair to mortal eyes. In the meanwhile the wood thrush sings in the woods around the lake.[2]

Pycnanthemum lanceolatum, probably as early as the other variety, *Hypericum corymbosum*. Spotted St. John's-wort, some time in July.

History has not been so truthfully or livingly, convincingly, written but that we still need the evidence, the oral testimony of an eye-witness. Hence I am sin-

[1] *Acalypha Virginica*, three-seeded mercury.

[2] [*Walden*, p. 96; Riv. 136, 137.]

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gularly surprised when I read of the celebrated Henry Jenkins (who lived to be some one hundred and sixty nine years old), who used to preface his conversation in this wise, "About a hundred and thirty years ago, when I was butler to Lord Conyers," etc. I am surprised to find that I needed this testimony to be convinced of the reality of Lord Conyers's existence.

Aug. 5. I can tell the extent to which a man has heard music by the faith he retains in the trivial and mean, even by the importance he attaches to what is called the actual world. Any memorable strains will have unsettled so low a faith and substituted a higher. Men profess to be lovers of music, but for the most part they give no evidence in their opinions and lives that they have heard it. It would not leave them narrow-minded and bigoted.

Hearing that one with whom I was acquainted had committed suicide, I said I did not know when I had planted the seed of that fact that I should hear of it.

P. M. — To C. Miles's blueberry swamp.

There is a pond-hole there perfectly covered with the leaves of the floating-heart and whiter than ever with its small white flowers, as if a slight large-flaked snow had fallen on it. The ground rises gently on every side, and first by the edge grow a few gratiolas, then the *Lysimachia stricta*, with a few blossoms left, then, a rod or two distant, in the higher rows of this natural coliseum, the red-panicled racemes of the hardhack rise. That is a glorious swamp of Miles's, — the more open parts, where the dwarf andromeda prevails. Now, per-

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haps, an olivaceous green is the tint, not at all reddish, the lambkill and the bluish or glaucous rhodora and the pyrus intermixed making an extensive rich moss-like bed, in which you sink three feet to a dry bottom of moss or dead twigs, or, if peaty ground, it is covered with cup lichens; surrounded all by wild-looking woods, with the wild white spruce advancing into it and the pitch pine here and there, and high blueberry and tall pyrus and holly and other bushes under their countenance and protection. These are the wildest and richest gardens that we have. Such a depth of verdure into which you sink. They were never cultivated by any. Descending wooded hills, you come suddenly to this beautifully level pasture, comparatively open, with a close border of high blueberry bushes. You cannot believe that this can possibly abut on any cultivated field. Some wood or pasture, at least, must intervene. Here is a place, at last, which no woodchopper nor farmer frequents and to which no cows stray, perfectly wild, where the bittern and the hawk are undisturbed. The men, women, and children who perchance come hither blueberrying in their season get more than the value of the berries in the influences of the scene. How wildly rich and beautiful hang on high there the blueberries which might so easily be poisonous, the cool blue clusters high in air. Choke-berries, fair to the eye but scarcely palatable, hang far above your head, weighing down the bushes. The wild holly berry, perhaps the most beautiful of berries, hanging by slender threads from its more light and open bushes and more delicate leaves. The bushes, eight feet high, are black with

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choke-berries, and there are no wild animals to eat them.

I cannot sufficiently admire the rhexia, one of the highest-colored purple flowers, but difficult to bring home in its perfection, with its fugacious petals. The *Hieracium scabrum* is just opening. Large spotted polygonum by the river, with white flowers on a slender spike. *Lechea racemulosa* (?) of Bigelow, — not in Gray, — a fine, almost leafless, bushy, sometimes reddish, low plant in dry fields.

Aug. 6. 5 A. M. — I do not hear this morning the breathing of chip-birds nor the song of robins. Are the mornings now thus ushered in? Are they as spring-like? Has not the year grown old? Methinks we do ourselves, at any rate, somewhat tire of the season and observe less attentively and with less interest the opening of new flowers and the song of the birds. It is the signs of the fall that affect us most. It is hard to live in the summer content with it.

To Cliffs.

How different the feeble twittering of the birds here at sunrise from the full quire of the spring! Only the wood thrush, a huckleberry-bird or two, or chickadee, the scream of a flicker or a jay, or the caw of a crow, and commonly only an alarmed note of a robin. A solitary peawai may be heard, perchance, or a red-eye, but no thrashers, or catbirds, or oven-birds, or the jingle of the chewink. I hear the ominous twittering of the goldfinch over all.

The village is seen through a thin veil of fog. I just

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distinguish the tree-tops beneath me in the southwest, and the light-colored river through the mist, which is gathering and preparing to retreat before the sun. From a tree-top I see the surface of Walden, whose shores are laid bare, the sun being directly opposite, and therefore the surface of the lake is a bright sheen seen through some stately pines near the railroad. This bright, silvery sheen comes through the dispersing mists to me, its shores being still concealed by fog, and a low white scudding mist is seen against the more distant dark clouds, drifting westward over all the forests before the sun.

Gathered some of those large, sometimes pear-shaped, sweet blue huckleberries which grow amid the rubbish where woods have just been cut.

A farmer told me that he lost a good many doves by their being trodden upon by oxen.

P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook and hill beyond.

I still remember how much bluer those early blueberries were that grew in the shade. Have just finished Gilpin's "Lakes of Cumberland." An elegant writer of English prose. I wish he would look at scenery sometimes not with the eye of an artist. It is all side screens and fore screens and near distances and broken grounds with him. I remark that in his tour through Wales, and afterward through Cumberland and Westmoreland, he never ascends to the top of a mountain, and if he gets up higher than usual, he merely says that the view is grand and amusing, as if because it was not easy to paint, or *picturesque*, it was not worth

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beholding, or deserving of serious attention. However, his elegant moderation, his discrimination, and real interest in nature excuse many things.

Milkweeds and trumpet-flowers are important now, to contrast with the cool, dark, shaded sides and recesses of moist copses. I see their red under the willows and alders everywhere against a dark ground. Methinks that blue, next to red, attracts us in a flower. Blue vervain is now very attractive to me, and then there is that interesting progressive history in its rising ring of blossoms. It has a story. Next to our blood is our prospect of heaven. Does not the blood in fact show blue in the covered veins and arteries, when distance lends enchantment to the view? The sight of it is more affecting than I can describe or account for.

The rainbow, after all, does not attract an attention proportionate to its singularity and beauty. Moses (?) was the last to comment on it. It is a phenomenon more aside from the common course of nature. Too distinctly a sign or symbol of something to be disregarded. What form of beauty could be imagined more striking and conspicuous? An arch of the most brilliant and glorious colors completely spanning [the] heavens before the eyes of men! Children look at it. It is wonderful that all men do not take pains to behold it. At some waterfalls it is permanent, as long as the sun shines. Plainly thus the Maker of the universe sets the seal to his covenant with men. Many articles are thus clinched. Designed to impress man. All men beholding it begin to understand the significance of the Greek epithet applied to the world, — name for the world, —

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Kosmos, or beauty. It was designed to impress man. We live, as it were, within the calyx of a flower.

Methinks there are few new flowers of late. An abundance of small fruits takes their place. Summer gets to be an old story. Birds leave off singing, as flowers blossoming, *i. e.* perhaps in the same proportion. With the goldenrod comes the goldfinch. About the time his cool twitter was heard, did not the bobolink, thrasher, catbird, oven-bird, veery, etc., cease?

I see some delicate ferns, in the low damp woods by the brook, which have turned whitish at the extremity. Cohush berries have just begun to be white, as if they contained a pearly venom, — wax white with a black spot (or very dark brown), imp-eyed. The leaves of one of the cornels (alternate-leaved or else round-leaved) are, some of them, turned lake-color.

The weeds are now very high and rank in moist wood-paths and along such streams as this. I love to follow up the course of the brook and see the cardinal-flowers which stand in its midst above the rocks, their brilliant scarlet the more interesting in this open, but dark, cellar-like wood; the small purple fringed orchises with long dense spikes, all flower, — for that is often all that is seen above the leaves of other plants (is not this the last flower of this peculiar *flower* kind, — *i. e.* all flower and color, the leaves subordinated?); and the *Mimulus ringens*, abundant and handsome in these low and rather shady places. Many flowers, of course, like the last, are prominent, if you visit such scenes as this, though one who confines himself to the road may never see them.

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From Smith's Hill beyond, there is as good a view of the mountains as from any place in our neighborhood, because you look across the broad valley in which Concord lies first of all. The foreground is on a larger scale and more proportionate. The Peterboro Hills are to us as good as mountains. Hence, too, I see that fair river-reach, in the north. I find a bumblebee asleep in a thistle blossom (a pasture thistle), the loiterer; having crowded himself in deep amid the dense florets, out of the reach of birds, while the sky was overcast. What a sweet couch!

As I always notice the tone of the bell when I go into a new town, so surely, methinks, I notice some peculiarity in the accent and manners of the inhabitants.

The bristly aralia berries are ripe; like the sarsaparilla, a blue black. The shorn fields are acquiring a late green or refresh [*sic*]. They are greener, much, than a month ago, before the grass was cut. For ten days the weather has been cool and the air full of moisture. Is it not because of the increase of vegetation, the leaves being multiplied, the weeds more rank, the shadows heavier? This is what is called dog-day weather. The water in the river and pond is quite cool, and it is more bracing and invigorating to bathe, though less luxurious. Methinks the water cannot again be as warm as it has been. *Erechthites hieracifolia*, apparently a day or two. *Lespedeza capitata*. *Aralia racemosa*, how long? — petty morel, spikenard, like a large sarsaparilla. *Hieracium paniculatum*. *Lycopus Virginicus* (with five calyx-teeth). Solidagos, *lanceolata* (?) and *puberula* (?). *Stellaria media* at R. W. E.'s. Is it the same, then,

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which I saw in Cheney's garden so early? That clammy, hairy-leaved cerastium (?) I still see, with a starry white flower. Was it the *Urtica gracilis* I examined, or the common nettle? What is that plant at the brook with hairy under sides now budded?

Aug. 7. When I think of the thorough drilling to which young men are subjected in the English universities, acquiring a minute knowledge of Latin prosody and of Greek particles and accents, so that they can not only turn a passage of Homer into English prose or verse, but readily a passage of Shakespeare into Latin hexameters or elegiacs, — that this and the like of this is to be liberally educated, — I am reminded how different was the education of the actual Homer and Shakespeare. The worthies of the world and liberally educated have always, in this sense, got along with little Latin and less Greek.

At this season we have gentle rain-storms, making the aftermath green. The rich and moist English grass land looks very green after the rain, as if it were a second spring.

If I were to choose a time for a friend to make a passing visit to this world for the first time, in the full possession of all his faculties, perchance it would be at a moment when the sun was setting with splendor in the west, his light reflected far and wide through the clarified air after a rain, and a brilliant rainbow, as now, o'erarching the eastern sky. Would he be likely to think this a vulgar place to live [*sic*], where one would weary of existence, and be compelled to devote

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his life to frivolity and dissipation? If a man travelling from world to world were to pass through this world at such a moment, would he not be tempted to take up his abode here?

We see the rainbow apparently when we are on the edge of the rain, just as the sun is setting. If we are too deep in the rain, then it will appear dim. Sometimes it is so near that I see a portion of its arch this side of the woods in the horizon, tingeing them. Sometimes we are completely within it, enveloped by it, and experience the realization of the child's wish. The obvious colors are red and green. Why green? It is astonishing how brilliant the red may be. What is the difference between that red and the ordinary red of the evening sky? Who does not feel that here is a phenomenon which natural philosophy alone is inadequate to explain? The use of the rainbow, who has described it?

Aug. 8. 5 A. M. — Awoke into a rosy fog. I was enveloped by the skirts of Aurora.

To the Cliffs.

The small dewdrops rest on the *Asclepias pulchra* by the roadside like gems, and the flower has lost half its beauty when they are shaken off. What mean these orange-colored toadstools that cumber the ground, and the citron-colored (ice-cream-like) fungus? Is the earth in her monthly courses? The fog has risen up before the sun around the summit of Fair Haven. It does not make such perfect seas as formerly. It is too general and wandering. It must have a core over the river —

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as this has not — and be of sufficient density to keep down on the low lands in a clear white, not grayish, smoky mass, and there must be no wind to drift it about. However, the Bedford meeting-house, rising above it and dark toward the sun, looks like a ship far at sea with all sails set. Thus the clouds may be said to float low at this season, — rest on the ground in the morning, — so that you look down on them from the hills. The whole surface of the earth is now streaked with wreaths of fog over meadow and forest, alternating with the green. The sun, now working round the Cliffs, fires his rays into the battalions of fog which are collected over Fair Haven Pond and have taken refuge on the west side of the Hill; routs and disperses them. A dewy, cobwebbed morning. You observe the geometry of cobwebs, though most are of that gossamer character, close woven, as if a fairy had dropt her veil on the grass in the night.

Men have, perchance, detected every kind of flower that grows in this township, have pursued it with children's eyes into the thickest and darkest woods and swamps, where the painter's color has betrayed it. Have they with proportionate thoroughness plucked every flower of thought which it is possible for a man to entertain, proved every sentiment which it is possible for a man to experience, here? Men have circumnavigated this globe of land and water, but how few have sailed out of sight of common sense over the ocean of knowledge!

The entertaining a single thought of a certain elevation makes all men of one religion. It is always some

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base alloy that creates the distinction of sects. Thought greets thought over the widest gulfs of time with unerring freemasonry. I know, for instance, that Sadi entertained once identically the same thought that I do, and thereafter I can find no essential difference between Sadi and myself. He is not Persian, he is not ancient, he is not strange to me. By the identity of his thoughts with mine he still survives. It makes no odds what atoms serve us. Sadi possessed no greater privacy or individuality than is thrown open to me. He had no more interior and essential and sacred self than can come naked into my thought this moment. Truth and a true man is something essentially public, not private. If Sadi were to come back to claim a *personal* identity with the historical Sadi, he would find there were too many of us; he could not get a skin that would contain us all. The symbol of a personal identity preserved in this sense is a mummy from the catacombs, — a whole skin, it may [be], but no life within it. By living the life of a man is made common property. By sympathy with Sadi I have embowelled him. In his thought I have a sample of *him*, a slice from his core, which makes it unimportant where certain bones which the thinker once employed may lie; but I could not have got this without being equally entitled to it with himself. The difference between any man and that posterity amid whom he is famous is too insignificant to sanction that he should be set up again in any world as distinct from them. Methinks I can be as intimate with the essence of an ancient worthy as, so to speak, he was with himself.

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I only know myself as a human entity, the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections, and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it, and that is no more I than it is you. When the play — it may be the tragedy of life — is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned. A man *may* be affected by a theatrical exhibition; on the other hand, he *may not* be affected by an actual event which appears to concern him never so much.

P. M. — To Heywood's Pond.

Ambrosia artemisiæfolia. July was a month of dry, torrid heat and drouth, especially the fore part. August, thus far, of gentle rain-storms and fogs, dog-days. Things mildew now. The sun is warm, but it is damp and cool in shade. The colored willow-herb is an interesting small flower, pink (?) or white, with its long seed-vessel, in railroad gutter by red house. Dodder (*Cuscuta Americana*) just out. *Cerasus Virginiana* is now dark, almost quite black, and rather edible. It was only red before. Elder-berries almost ripe. I notice now, along the North River, horse-mint, arrowhead, cardinal-flower, trumpet-weed (just coming out), water parsnip, skull-cap (*lateriflora*), monkey-flower, etc., etc. Rattlesnake-plantain is budded. Rivers meander most not amid rugged mountains, but through soft level

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meadows. In some places the ground is covered now with the black umbelled berries of the sarsaparilla. The naked viburnum berries are now greenish-white. *Nabalus albus*, white lettuce, perhaps a week? Varies in leaves. *Spiranthes gracilis*, slender neottia, for some time. *Goodyera repens*, white-veined rattlesnake-plantain, some days (?). *Bartonia tenella* (*Centaurella*), apparently leafless plant, in path in Ministerial Swamp. *Hieracium Gronovii* (?). An aster near the lygodium, with numerous small white flowers, apparently either the umbelled or spreading of Bigelow, just opening. No man ever makes a discovery, ever [*sic*] an observation of the least importance, but he is advertised of the fact by a joy that surprises him. The powers thus celebrate all discovery. The squirrels are now devouring the hazelnuts fast. A lupine blossomed again.

Aug. 11. *Wednesday.* Alcott here the 9th and 10th. He, the spiritual philosopher, is, and has been for some months, devoted to the study of his own genealogy, — he whom only the genealogy of humanity, the descent of man from God, should concern! He has been to his native town of Wolcott, Connecticut, on this errand, has faithfully perused the records of some fifteen towns, has read the epitaphs in as many churchyards, and, wherever he found the name Alcock, excerpted it and all connected with it, — for he is delighted to discover that the original name was All-*cock* and meant something, that some grandfather or great-grandfather bore it, Philip Alcock (though his son wisely enough changed it to Alcott). He who wrote of Human Culture, he who conducted

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the Conversations on the Gospels, he who discoursed of Sleep, Health, Worship, Friendship, etc., last winter, now reading the wills and the epitaphs of the Alcocks with the zeal of a professed antiquarian and genealogist! He has discovered that one George Alcock (afterwards Deacon George) came over with Winthrop in 1630 and settled in Roxbury. Has read Eliot's account of him in the Church records and been caught by a passage in which [his] character is described by Eliot as being of "good savor." I think it is. But he has by no means made out his descent from him. Only knows that that family owned lands in Woodstock, Connecticut. Nevertheless the similarity of name is enough, and he pursues the least trace of it. Has visited a crockery-dealer in Boston who trades with Alcocks of Staffordshire (?), England, *great* potters who took a prize at the world's fair. Has through him obtained a cup or so with the name of the maker Alcock on it. Has it at his house. Has got the dealer to describe the persons of those Staffordshire Alcocks, and finds them to be of the right type, even to their noses. He knew they must be so. Has visited the tomb of Dr. John Alcock in the Granary Burying-Ground, read, and copied it. Has visited also the only bearer of the name in Boston, a sail-maker perchance, — though there is no evidence of the slightest connection except through Adam, — and communicated with him. He says I should survey Concord and put down every house exactly as it stands with the name. Admires the manuscript of the old records; more pleasing than print. Has some design to collect and print epitaphs.

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Thinks they should be collected and printed *verbatim et literatim*, every one in every yard, with a perfect index added, so that persons engaged in such pursuits as himself might be absolutely sure, when they turned to the name Alcock, for instance, to find it if it was there, and not have to look over the whole yard. Talks of going to England — says it would be in his way — to visit the Alcocks of Staffordshire. Has gone now to find where lie the three thousand acres granted to the Roxbury family in 16— "on the Assabett," and has talked with a lawyer about the possibility of breaking the title, etc., etc., from time to time pulling out a long notebook from his bosom, with epitaphs and the like copied into it. Had copied into it the epitaph of my grandmother-in-law which he came across in some graveyard (in Charlestown?), thinking "it would interest me!"

C. says he keeps a dog for society, to stir up the air of the room when it becomes dead, for he experiences awful solitudes. Another time thinks we must cultivate the social qualities, perhaps had better keep two dogs apiece.

P. M. — To Conantum.

The mountain-ash berries are turning. We had a ripe watermelon on the 7th. I see the great yellow flowers of the squash amid the potatoes in the garden, one of the largest yellow flowers we have. How fat and rich! Of course it is long since they blossomed. Green corn begins. The autumnal ring of the alder locust. White lilies are not very numerous now. The skunk-cabbage leaves are fallen and decaying, and their fruit

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is black. Their fall is earlier than that of other plants. What is that tall plant now budded by the Corner Spring? [1] I am attracted by the clear dark-green leaves of the fever-bush. The rum cherry is ripe. The *Collinsonia Canadensis* just begun. The great trumpet-weeds now fairly out. Sumach berries now generally red. Some naked viburnum berries are red. The sweet viburnum turning. The larger skull-cap is quite an important and interesting flower. *Platanthera blephariglottis*, white fringed orchis. This side of Hubbard's Meadow Bridge, *Lespedeza hirta* (hairy), *Cannabis sativa*, apparently out. *Aster corymbosus*, path beyond Corner Spring and in Miles Swamp. *Cicuta bulbifera*, first seen July 21st and called *Sium lineare*. The true (?) *Sium lineare*, probably last month.[2]

Aug. 12. Walked to Walden and Fair Haven Hill with Mrs. Wilson and son, of Cincinnati. They tell me that the only men of thought in that part of the world are one young Goddard and Stallo the German. The subjects that engage the mass are theological dogmas and European politics. The man of the West is not yet.

Solidago bicolor, white goldenrod, apparently in good season.

Aug. 13. *Mikania scandens* well out; was not out July 18th. How long since, then? Perhaps not far from 1st August. The *Lactuca sanguinea* (var.) was perhaps as early as the other. Rhexia, very common

[1] *Chelone glabra.* [2] *Vide* July 8 [p. 203.]

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on those bare places on the river meadows from which the soil has been moved by the ice. Saw the head and neck of a great bittern projecting above the meadow-grass, exactly like the point of a stump, only I knew there could be no stump there. There are green lice now on the birches, but I notice no cotton on them. Pennyroyal abundant in bloom. I find it springing from the soil lodged on large rocks in sprout-lands, and gather a little bundle, which scents my pocket for many days. I hear that the *Corallorhiza odontorhiza*, coral-root, is out.

Aug. 14. *Viburnum dentatum* berries blue. Saw a rose still. There is such a haze that I cannot see the mountains.

Aug. 15. Some birds fly in flocks. I see a dense, compact flock of bobolinks going off in the air over a field. They cover the rails and alders, and go rustling off with a brassy, tinkling note like a ripe crop as I approach, revealing their yellow breasts and bellies. This is an autumnal sight, that small flock of grown birds in the afternoon sky.

Elder-berry ripe. The river was lowest early in July. Some time past I have noticed meadow-grass floating on the river, reminding me that they were getting the hay up the stream. Some naked viburnum berries are quite dark purple amid the red, while other bunches are wholly green yet. The red choke-berry is small and green still. I plainly distinguish it, also, by its woolly under side. In E. Hubbard's swamp I gather some

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large and juicy and agreeable rum cherries. The birds make much account of them. They are much finer than the small ones on large trees; quite a good fruit. Some cranberries turned red on one cheek along the edges of the meadows. Now a sudden gust of wind blows from the northwest, cooled by a storm there, blowing the dust from roads far over the fields. The whole air, indeed, is suddenly filled with dust, and the outlines of the clouds are concealed. But it proves only the wind of the ball, which apparently passes north of us. That clear ring like an alder locust (is it a cricket?) for some time past is a sound which belongs to the season, — autumnal. Here is a second crop of clover almost as red as the first. The swamp blackberry begins. Saw a blue heron on the meadow. *Aster amplexicaulis* of Bigelow, apparently; probably for a day or two. An orchis by the brook under the Cliffs with only three white flowers, only smaller than the fringed white; spurs half an inch long. May it be another species?

Aug. 16. P. M. — Down river in boat with George Bradford.

Zizania aquatica, Indian or Canadian rice, or water oats, like slender corn. How long?

Hibiscus Moscheutos (?), marsh hibiscus, apparently, N. Barrett's. Perchance has been out a week. I think it must be the most conspicuous and showy and at the same time *rich*-colored flower of this month. It is not so conspicuous as the sunflower, but of a rarer color, — "pale rose-purple," they call it, — like a hollyhock. It is surprising for its amount of color, and, seen unex-

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pectedly amid the willows and button-bushes, with the mikania twining around its stem, you can hardly believe it is a flower, so large and tender it looks, like the greatest effort of the season to adorn the August days, and reminded me of that great tender moth, the *Attacus luna*, which I found on the water near where it grows. I think it must be allied to southern species. It suggests a more genial climate and luxuriant soil. It requires these vaporous dog-days.

Galeopsis Tetrahit, common hemp-nettle, in roadside by Keyes's. How long? Flower like hedge-nettle. *Apios tuberosa*, ground-nut, a day or two. These are locust days. I hear them on the elms in the street, but cannot tell where they are. Loud is their song, drowning many others, but men appear not to distinguish it, though it pervades their ears as the dust their eyes. The river was exceedingly fair this afternoon, and there are few handsomer reaches than that by the leaning oak, the deep place, where the willows make a perfect shore.

At sunset, the glow being confined to the north, it tinges the rails on the causeway lake-color, but behind they are a dead dark blue. I must look for the rudbeckia which Bradford says he found yesterday behind Joe Clark's.

Aug. 17. Twenty minutes before 5 A. M. — To Cliffs and Walden.

Dawn. No breathing of chip-birds nor singing of robins as in spring, but still the cock crows lustily. The creak of the crickets sounds louder. As I go along

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the back road, hear two or three song sparrows. This morning's red, there being a misty cloud there, is equal to an evening red. The woods are very still. I hear only a faint peep or twitter from one bird, then the never-failing wood thrush, it being about sunrise, and after, on the Cliff, the phœbe note of a chickadee, a night-warbler, a creeper (?), and a pewee (?), and, later still, the huckleberry-bird and red-eye, but all few and faint.

Cannot distinguish the steam of the engine toward Waltham from one of the morning fogs over hollows in woods. *Lespedeza violacea* var. (apparently) *angustifolia* (?), *sessiliflora* of Bigelow. Also another *L. violacea*, or at least violet, perhaps different from what I saw some time since. *Gerardia pedicularia*, bushy gerardia, almost ready. The white cornel berries are dropping off before they are fairly white.

Is not the hibiscus a very bright pink or even flesh-color? It is so delicate and peculiar. I do not think of any flower just like it. It reminds me of some of the wild geraniums most. It is a singular, large, delicate, high-colored flower with a tree-like leaf.

Gaylussacia frondosa, blue-tangle, dangle-berry, ripe perhaps a week. Weston of Lincoln thought there were more grapes, both cultivated and wild, than usual this year, because the rose-bugs had not done so much harm.

Aug. 18. 3 P. M. — To Joe Clark's and Hibiscus Bank.

I cannot conceive how a man can accomplish anything worthy of him, unless his very breath is sweet to

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him. He must be particularly alive. As if a man were himself and could work well only at a certain rare crisis.

The river is full of weeds. The *Hypericum mutilum*, small-flowered, has in some places turned wholly red on the shore. There is indeed something royal about the month of August. Its is a more ingrained and perhaps more tropical heat than that of July. Though hot, it is not so suffocating and unveiled a blaze. The vapors in the air temper it somewhat. But we have had some pretty cool weather within a week or two, and the evenings generally are cooler. As I go over the hill behind Hunt's, the North River has a glassy stillness and smoothness, seen through the smoky haze that fills the air and has the effect of a film on the water, so that it looks stagnant. No mountains can be seen. The locust is heard. The fruits are ripening. Ripe apples here and there scent the air. Huckleberries probably have begun to spoil. I see those minute yellow cocoons on the grass. Hazelnuts; methinks it is time to gather them if you would anticipate the squirrels. The clematis and mikania belong to this month, filling the crevices and rounding the outline of leafy banks and hedges.

Perceived to-day and some weeks since (August 3d) the strong invigorating aroma of green walnuts, astringent and bracing to the spirits, the fancy and imagination, suggesting a tree that has its roots well in amid the bowels of nature. Their shells are, in fact and from association, exhilarating to smell, suggesting a strong, nutty native vigor. A fruit which I am glad

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that our zone produces, looking like the nutmeg of the East. I acquire some of the hardness and elasticity of the hickory when I smell them. They are among *our* spices. High-scented, aromatic, as you bruise one against another in your hand, almost like nutmegs, only more bracing and northern. Fragrant stones which the trees bear.

The hibiscus flowers are seen a quarter of a mile off over the water, like large roses, now that these high colors are rather rare. Some are exceedingly delicate and pale, almost white, just rose-tinted, others a brighter pink or rose-color, and all slightly plaited (the five large petals) and turned toward the sun, now in the west, trembling in the wind. So much color looks very rich in these localities. The flowers are some four inches in diameter, as large as water-lilies, rising amid and above the button-bushes and willows, with a large light-green tree-like leaf and a stem half an inch in diameter, apparently dying down to a perennial (?) root each year. A superb flower. Where it occurs it is certainly, next to the white lily, if not equally with it, the most splendid ornament of the river. Looking up the gleaming river, reflecting the August sun, the round-topped silvery *white* maples, the glossy-leaved swamp white oaks, the ethereal and buoyant *Salix Purshiana*, — the first and last resting on the water and giving the river a full appearance, — and the hibiscus flowers adorning the shores, contrasting with the green across the river, close to the water's edge, the meadows being just shorn, all make a perfect August scene. Here is the place where the hayers cross the river with their loads. As I made

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excursions on the river when the white lilies were in bloom, so now I should make a hibiscus excursion.

Rudbeckia laciniata, sunflower-like tall cone-flower, behind Joe Clark's. *Symphytum officinale*, common comfrey, by Dakin, pump-maker's. The *Cerastium viscosum* which I saw months ago, still. And the ovate heads of the tall anemone gone to seed. *Linum usitatissimum*, common flax, with a pretty large and pretty blue flower in the yard. *Rumex obtusifolius*, for weeks, apparently.

Elizabeth Hoar shows me the following plants which she brought from the White Mountains the 16th: *Chiogenes hispidula*, creeping snow-berry, also called *Gaultheria* and also *Vaccinium hispidulum, in fruit*, with a partridge-berry scent and taste; *Taxus Canadensis*, ground hemlock, with red cup-shaped berries, very handsome and remarkably like wax or red marble; *Platanthera orbiculata*, remarkable for its watery shining leaves, flat on the ground, while its spike of flowers rises perpendicular, suggesting, as she said, repose and steadiness amid the prostrate trunks, — and you could not avoid seeing it any more than a child, — in blossom; *Oxalis Acetosella*, in blossom; *Arenaria Grœnlandica*, also in bloom, in tufts like houstonia; *Lonicera ciliata*, probably, with a double red fruit. She also brought lichens and mosses and convallaria berries which she gathered at the Flume in Franconia. The latter, red-ripe, hanging from the axils of the leaves, affected me, reminding me of the progress of autumn in the north; and the other two were a very fit importation, still dripping with the moisture, the water, of

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the Flume. It carries you, indeed, into the primitive wood. To think how, in those wild woods, now hang these wild berries, in grim solitude as of yore, already scenting their autumn! A thousand years ago this convallaria growing there, its berries turning red as now and its leaves acquiring an autumnal tint. Lichens and mosses enough to cover a waiter, still dripping with the water of the Flume, — is not that a true specimen of it?

J. [?] Stacy says that fifty years ago his father used to blow his fire with onion stems. Thinks there have been great improvements. But then, as I hear, there was a bellows-maker in the town. Is not that the *Aster umbellatus* which I found by the lygodium?

Aug. 19. 2 P. M. — To Corner Spring, Burnt Plain, and Brister Hill.

Forget-me-not Brook, *Epilobium lineare* (Bigelow), *molle* (?) (Gray). The small fruits of most plants are now generally ripe or ripening, and this is coincident with the flying in flocks of such young birds now grown as feed on them. The twittering, tinkling *link* notes of the bobolinks occasionally border on the old bobolink strain. The *Epilobium coloratum* is an interesting little flower for its contrasted white and pink; the bud is commonly pink. The *Viburnum dentatum* berries are now blue. I still find the stitchwort (*Stellaria*). Many leaves of the mountain sumach are red. What are the checkerberry-scented plants? Checkerberry; black and yellow birch; polygala, caducous and cross-leaved and *verticillata*, at root; *Chiogenes hispidula*, creeping snow-

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berry. I perceive the fragrance of the clethra on the meadow gales. The checkerberries are in bloom, looking almost like snow-white berries. The dracæna berries, "amethystine blue," are almost all fallen. The dangle-berry is a very handsome tangled berry, but with a slightly astringent and to me not altogether agreeable flavor. What is that large many-flowered hieracium (I think I saw it at same time with the veiny), with radical leaves and one sheathing leaflet and a spreading panicle minutely downy? *Gronovii?* or *Kalmii?* The trillium berries, six-sided, one inch in diameter, like varnished and stained cherry wood, glossy red, crystalline and ingrained, concealed under its green leaves in shady swamps. It is already fall in some of these shady, springy swamps, as at the Corner Spring. The skunk-cabbages and the trilliums, both leaves and fruit, are many flat prostrate, the former decaying, and all looking as if early frosts had prevailed. Here, too, the bright scarlet berries of the arum, perhaps premature.

Here is a little brook of very cold spring-water, rising a few rods distant, with a gray sandy and pebbly bottom, flowing through this dense swampy thicket, where, nevertheless, the sun falls in here and there between the leaves and shines on its bottom, meandering exceedingly, and sometimes running underground. The trilliums on its brink have fallen into it and bathe their red berries in the water, waving in the stream. The water has the coldness it acquired in the bowels of the earth. Here is a recess apparently never frequented. Thus this rill flowed here a thousand years

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ago, and with exactly these environments. It is a few rods of primitive wood, such as the bear and the deer beheld. It has a singular charm for me, carrying me back in imagination to those days. Yet a fisherman has once found out this retreat, and here is his box in the brook to keep his minnows in, now gone to decay. I love the rank smells of the swamp, its decaying leaves. The clear dark-green leaves of the fever-bush overhang the stream.

I name the shore under Fair Haven Hill the Cardinal Shore from the abundance of cardinal-flowers there. The red-stemmed (?) cornel berries are mingled whitish and amethystine (?) blue. I see some bright red leaves on the tupelo contrasting with its glossy green ones. How sweet the fragrance where meadow-hay has been brushed off a load in narrow paths in low woods! The panicled (?) hedysarum apparently will blossom in a week. *Gerardia purpurea* at Forget-me-not Brook. *Eupatorium pubescens*, between this and the first of August.

Aug. 20. That large galium still abundant and in blossom, filling crevices. The *Corallorhiza multiflora*, coral-root (not *odontorhiza*, I think, for it has twenty-four flowers, and its germ is not roundish oval, and its lip is three-lobed), by Brister's Spring. Found by R. W. E., August 12; also *Goodyera pubescens* found at same date. The purple gerardia is very beautiful now in green grass, and the rhexia also, both difficult to get home. I find raspberries still. An aster with a smooth leaf narrowed below, somewhat like *A. amplexi-*

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caulis (or *patens* (Gray)?). Is it var. *phlogifolius?* Is that smooth, handsome-stemmed goldenrod in Brown's Sleepy Hollow meadow *Solidago serotina?*

Bidens, either *connata* or *cernua*, by Moore's potato-field.

Aug. 21. Weeds in potato-fields are now very rank. What should we come to if the season were longer, and the reins were given to vegetation? Those savages that do not wither before the glance of civilization, that are waiting their turn to be cultivated, preparing a granary for the birds. The air within a day or two is quite cool, almost too cool for a thin coat, yet the alternate days are by some reckoned among the warmest in the year, *scalding* hot. That will apply very well to the greatest heat of August. Young turkeys are straying in the grass, which is alive with grasshoppers.

3 P. M. — To Bear Hill *via* railroad and Flint's.

The bees, wasps, etc., are on the goldenrods, impatient to be interrupted, improving their time before the sun of the year sets. A man killed by lightning would have a good answer ready in the next world to the question "How came *you* here?" which he need not hesitate to give. Can that be *Mulgedium leucophæum*, with the aspect of a lettuce but bluish flowers, seven feet high with a panicle two feet by ten inches? Cat-tails ripe. The common epilobium holds not a neat flower but rich-colored.

Moralists say of men, By their fruits ye shall know them, but botanists say of plants, By their flowers ye shall know them. This is very well generally, but they

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must make exceptions sometimes when the fruit is fairer than the flower. They are to be compared at that stage in which they are most significant to man. I say that sometimes by their fruits ye shall know them. The bright red or scarlet fruit of the scarlet thorn (*Cratægus coccinea*) in the woods off Bear Hill road, Winn's woods. How handsomely they contrast with the green leaves! Are edible also. Fruits now take the place of flowers to some extent. These brilliant-colored fruits, flower-like. There are few flowers have such brilliant and remarkable colors as the fruit of the arum, trillium, convallarias, dracæna, cornels, viburnums, actæa, etc., etc. I must notice this kind of flowers now.

The leaves of the dogsbane are turning yellow. There are as few or fewer birds heard than flowers seen. The red-eye still occasionally. Agrimony still. "The dry, pearly, and almost incorruptible heads of the Life Everlasting." Ah! this is a truly elysian flower now, beyond change and decay, not lusty but immortal, — pure ascetics, suggesting a widowed virginity. *Bidens frondosa* in corn-fields under Bear Hill, west side. The large kind. *Polygonum arifolium*, a very large scratchweed, in the ditch in Baker's Swamp, reminding me of a boa-constrictor creeping over the plants' stems, a third of an inch in diameter. Some time earlier in this month. The sound of the crickets gradually prevails more and more. I hear the year falling asleep. When dry seeds come, then I hear these dry locust and cricket sounds. Berries are still abundant on Bear Hill, but how late when huckleberries begin to be wormy and pickers are deserting the fields?

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The high blackberries by the roadside are sweet though covered with dust. At this season, too, the farmers burn brush, and the smoke is added to the haziness of the atmosphere. From this hill I count five or six smokes, far and near, and am advertised of one species of industry over a wide extent of country. The mountains are just visible. The grass-poly by the Lincoln road, with its "fine purple" flowers. *Decodon verticillatus*, swamp loosestrife. Those in the water do not generally bloom. What stout, woody, perennial root-stocks! It is a handsome purple flower, falling over wreath-like on every side, with an epilobium look, a *lively* purple. The *Cardamine hirsuta* still. The bittersweet berries now bright red, still handsomer than the flowers. The barberries are turning. Many leaves of the pyrus, both kinds, are red, and some sweet-ferns. See the great umbels, lead-blue, of the *Aralia hispida*.

This coloring and reddening of the leaves toward fall is interesting; as if the sun had so prevailed that even the leaves, better late than never, were turning to flowers, — so filled with mature juices, the whole plant turns at length to one flower, and all its leaves are petals around its fruit or dry seed. A second flowering to celebrate the maturity of the fruit. The first to celebrate the age of puberty, the marriageable age; the second, the maturity of the parent, the age of wisdom, the fullness of years.

Aug. 22. *Sunday.* The ways by which men express themselves are infinite, — the literary through their writings, and often they do not mind with what

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air they walk the streets, being sufficiently reported otherwise. But some express themselves chiefly by their gait and carriage, with swelling breasts or elephantine roll and elevated brows, making themselves moving and adequate signs of themselves, having no other outlet. If their greatness had signalized itself sufficiently in some other way, though it were only in picking locks, they could afford to dispense with the swagger.

P. M. — To Marlborough road and White Pond.

Dodder by railroad bridge. I am attracted by the deep purple (?) of some polygalas standing amid dark-green grass. Some of the leaves of the choke-cherry are the brightest scarlet that I have seen, or, at least, the clearest. *Eupatorium purpureum* fully out everywhere. Potamogetons still in flower (small ones) in brooks. Heart-leaves in Walden and water-target leaves in the overflowed meadow. The elder bushes are weighed down with fruit partially turned, and are still in bloom at the extremities of their twigs. The low downy gnaphalium leaves are already prepared for winter and spring again on dry hills and sprout-lands. I am struck by the handsome and abundant clusters of yet green shrub oak acorns. Some are whitish. How much food for some creatures! The sprouts, apparently of the *Populus grandidentata*, run up very fast the first year where the wood has been cut, and make great leaves nearly a foot long and nine or ten inches wide, — unlike those of the parent tree, downy. Just smelled an apple which carried me forward to those days when they will be heaped in the orchards and about the cider-mills. The fragrance of some fruits is not to be forgot-

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ten, along with that of flowers.[1] Is not the high blackberry our finest berry? I gather very sweet ones which weigh down the vines in sprout-lands. The arum berries are mostly devoured, apparently by birds. The two-leaved Solomon's-seal berries begin to be red. *Rumex Hydrolapathum* (?) by Jenny's Brook. *Hieracium Canadense*, apparently Bigelow's *Kalmiana*, which Gray says is not Linnæus's, Marlborough road. The oval maple-leaved viburnum berries have got to be yellowish. The panicled cornel berries now white. The bushy gerardia is abundant on the White Pond road, beyond pond. What is that thistle in Brown's and Tarbell's meadows with no stem, only radical leaves, very prickly and not pinnatifid? *Desmodium acuminatum* still in bloom, near the poplars on White Pond road. The *Smilacina racemosa* has a compound raceme of red-speckled berries now. *Polygonatum pubescens* berries are now green with a bluish bloom, and the leaves eaten up. Was not that which E. Hoar brought from the White Mountains *Polygonatum canaliculatum* with axillary large red berries, though Gray says of this genus, its berries are black or blue?[2] Perhaps fruits are colored like the trillium berry and the scarlet thorn to attract birds to them. Is that rather large lilac-purple aster by Jenny's Brook *A. puniceus*?[3]

Aug. 23. 3 P. M. — To Assabet.

The river is eight and one twelfth feet below top of

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 295; Riv. 362.]

[2] Probably the large convallaria.

[3] *Longifolius*?

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truss.[1] Add eight and a half inches for its greatest height this year, and you have eight feet nine and a half inches for the difference. It is apparently as low now as the first week in July.[2] That is, those are the limits of our river's expansibility; so much it may swell. Of course, the water now in it is but a small fraction of that which it contains in the highest freshets, for this additional eight and nine twelfths feet is much more than its present average depth, half as much again perhaps, beside averaging eight or ten times its present width.

The ferns in low shady woods are faded. *Hydrocotyle Americana*, marsh pennywort, by the Lee place path. It probably opened in June or July. Saw a new form of arrowhead leaf with linear lobes, but the flowers apparently the same, a crystalline white. The bank at the bathing-place has now a new kind of beauty. It is spotted with bright-scarlet cardinal-flowers and bright-purple vernonias. The profuse clusters of grapes, partially concealed under their leaves, are turning; have got a purple tinge. Dense clusters of elder-berries, some black, some turning, are hanging drooping by their weight over the water. The glassy or bead (amethystine?) blue berries of the red osier[3] cornel, mixed with whitish, are as abundant as any berries here; and the dull slaty-blue and smaller berries of the *Viburnum dentatum* fill the remaining crevices. These things I see as I swim beneath it.

[1] Horizontal part (probably).

[2] This I calculate to be two inches below my summer level for 1859.

[3] Silky.

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About 8 P. M. — To Cliffs, moon half full.

As I go up the back road, I hear the loud ringing creak of crickets, louder singers on each apple tree by the roadside, with an intermittent pulsing creak. Not the sound of a bird all the way to the woods. How dark the shadows of the pines and oaks fall across the woodland path! There is a new tree, another forest in the shadow. It is pleasant walking in these forest paths, with heavy darkness on one side and a silvery moonlight on the oak leaves on the other, and again, when the trees meet overhead, to tread the checkered floor of finely divided light and shade. I hear a faint metallic titter from a bird, so faint that if uttered at noonday it would not be heard, — not so loud as a cricket. I cannot remember the last moon.

Now that birds and flowers fall off, fruits take their places, and young birds in flocks. What a list of bright-colored, sometimes venomous-looking berries spot the swamps and copses amid changing leaves! For colors they will surpass the flowers, methinks. There is something rare, precious, and gem-like about them. Now is their time, and I must attend to them. Some, like grapes, we gather and eat, but the fairest are not edible.

Now I sit on the Cliffs and look abroad over the river and Conantum hills. I live so much in my habitual thoughts, a routine of thought, that I forget there is any outside to the globe, and am surprised when I behold it as now, — yonder hills and river in the moonlight, the monsters. Yet it is salutary to deal with the surface of things. What are these rivers and hills, these hieroglyphics which my eyes behold? There is some-

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thing invigorating in this air, which I am peculiarly sensible is a real wind, blowing from over the surface of a planet. I look out at my eyes, I come to my window, and I feel and breathe the fresh air. It is a fact equally glorious with the most inward experience. Why have we ever slandered the outward? The perception of surfaces will always have the effect of miracle to a sane sense. I can see Nobscot faintly.

Descend the rocks and return through woods to railroad. How picturesque the moonlight on rocks in the woods! To-night there are no fireflies, no nighthawks nor whip-poor-wills.

Aug. 24. How far we can be apart and yet attract each other! There is one who almost wholly misunderstands me and whom I too probably misunderstand, toward whom, nevertheless, I am distinctly drawn. I have the utmost human good-will toward that one, and yet I know not what mistrust keeps us asunder. I am so much and so exclusively the friend of my friend's virtue that I am compelled to be silent for the most part, because his vice is present. I am made dumb by this third party. I only desire *sincere* relations with the worthiest of my acquaintance, that they may give me an opportunity once in a year to speak the truth. They invite me to see them, and do not show themselves. Who *are* they, pray? I pine and starve near them. The hospitable man will invite me to an atmosphere where truth can be spoken, where a man can live and breathe. Think what crumbs we offer each other, — and think to make up the deficiency with our *roast meats!* Let us

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have a human creature's heart and let go the beeve's heart. How happens it that I find myself making such an enormous demand on men and so constantly disappointed? Are my friends aware how disappointed I am? Is it all my fault? Have I no heart? Am I incapable of expansion and generosity? I shall accuse myself of everything else sooner. I have never met with a friend who furnished me sea-room. I have only tacked a few times and come to anchor, — not sailed, — made no voyage, carried no venture. Do they think me eccentric because I refuse this chicken's meat, this babe's food? Would not men have something to communicate if they were sincere? Is not my silent expectation an invitation, an offer, an opportunity offered? My friend has complained of me, cursed me even, but it did not affect me; I did not know the persons he talked about. I have been disappointed from first to last in my friends, but I have never complained of them, nor to them. I would have them know me, guess at me. It is not petty and trivial relations that I seek to establish with them. A world in which there is a demand for ice-creams but not for truth! I leave my friends early; I go away to cherish my idea of friendship. Is not friendship a great relation? My friend so treats me that I feel a thousand miles off; like the greatest possible stranger, speaking a different language; as if it would be the fittest thing in the world for us to be introduced. Persists in thinking me the opposite to what [I am], and so shuts my mouth. Intercourse with men! How little it amounts to! How rarely we love them! Do we not meet very much as Yankees

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meet Arabs? It is remarkable if a man gives us a civil answer about the road. And how far from love still are even pretty intimate friends! How little it is that we can trust each other! It is the bravest thing we do for one moment to put so much confidence in our companion as to treat him for what he aspires to be, a confidence which we retract instantly.

Like cuttlefish we conceal ourselves, we darken the atmosphere in which we move; we are not transparent. I pine for one to whom I can speak my *first thoughts;* thoughts which represent me truly, which are no better and no worse than I; thoughts which have the bloom on them, which alone can be sacred and divine. Our sin and shame prevent our expressing even the innocent thoughts we have. I know of no one to whom I can be transparent instinctively. I live the life of the cuttlefish; another appears, and the element in which I move is tinged and I am concealed. My first thoughts are azure; there is a bloom and a dew on them; they are papillaceous feelers which I put out, tender, innocent. Only to a friend can I expose them. To all parties, though they be youth and maiden, if they are transparent to each other, and their thoughts can be expressed, there can be no further nakedness. I cannot be surprised by an intimacy which reveals the outside, when it has shown me the inside. The result of a full communication of our thoughts would be the immediate neglect of those coverings which a false modesty wears.

P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook.

The *Viburnum dentatum* berries, which are, methinks,

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the earliest of the viburnums, are a dead light blue, small. The *Viburnum nudum* shows now rich, variegated clusters amid its handsome, firm leaves, — bright rosy-cheeked ones mingled with dark-purple. All do not appear to turn purple. The *Lentago* I have not seen ripe yet. The *acerifolium* is merely yellowish, oval, flattish. Of cornels, have not seen the dwarf nor the dogwood berries. The alternate-leaved with red cymes and round dull (?) blue berries appeared first; then the red osier began to turn bright, glass-beady, amethystine (?) blue, mixed with white, and is still for the most part green; then the white-berried. But the round-leaved I have not seen.

Autumnal dandelions are more common now. I see a smooth red-skinned gall on oak twigs.

Surely the high blackberry is the finest berry, — not by dusty roadsides, but when now the season is rather late, and you find them in some rocky sprout-land, far from any road, fully ripe, having escaped the pickers, weighing down their stems and half hidden amid the green leaves of other plants, black and shiny, ready to drop, with a spirited juice. Who will pretend that, plucked and eaten there, they are the same with those offered at the tea-table? These are among the berries that are eaten by men.

The *Neottia pubescens* is a rather interesting flower.

The ghost-horse on a goldenrod, a real caricature of Flying Childers, like a light-green seed-vessel, three or four inches long and one tenth of an inch in diameter, with four slender legs more than an inch long, in

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two pairs, springing from within an inch of each other in the middle of his body, and an eye more than an inch behind its snout, — a caricature on the horse, one or more of its legs in the air as if arrested while taking a step. You can hardly believe it is an insect, and if you handle it, it is so sluggish in its motions that you might not discover it, if not bent on it. Thus I thought of it, till I disturbed it, took it into my hand; and then found it had six legs and no long snout at all but only two slender feelers, that it had laid its two fore legs and feelers together, so as exactly to resemble a long snout, and also a seed-vessel the more, with its eye far in the rear.

The year is but a succession of days, and I see that I could assign some office to each day which, summed up, would be the history of the year. Everything is done in season, and there is no time to spare. The bird gets its brood hatched in season and is off. I looked into the nest where I saw a vireo feeding its young a few days ago, but it is empty; it is fledged and flown.

Smoke is very like but still different from cloud: first, from its rapid motion, from being nearer commonly; secondly, from a certain fuliginous or yellowish color in its hollows, as if it had fire in its entrails, a darkness not to be referred to shadow.

At Saw Mill Brook, *Solidago latifolia* budded. Saw Mill Brook path, *Desmodium paniculatum*, perhaps a week. By red house on Turnpike, *Polygonum Careyi*. In R. W. E.'s garden, *Pilea pumila*, rich-weed, August, and *Sonchus oleraceus*, common sow-thistle with a small

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dandelion-like flower, and also *Amaranthus albus*, the last July (?).

Aug. 25. Cape Wrath, the northwest cape of Scotland. What a good name for a cape lying far away, dark, over the water, under a lowering sky!

P. M. — To Conantum.

The dandelion blooms again.

One of the most noticeable wild fruits at present is the *Viburnum nudum* berries, their variegated cymes amid the green leaves in the swamps or low grounds, some whitish, some greenish, some red, some pink, some rose-purple and very beautiful, — not so beautiful, however, off the bush, — some dark purple or blue, and some black whose bloom is rubbed off, — a very rich sight. The silky cornel is the most common everywhere, bordering the river and swamps, its drooping cymes of amethystine (?) china or glass beads mingled with whitish. The fruit of the *Viburnum Lentago* is now very handsome, with its sessile cymes of large elliptical berries, green on one side and red with a purple bloom on the other or exposed side, not yet purple, blushing on one cheek. Many pyrus leaves are now red in the swamps, and some *Viburnum nudum*.

Yesterday was a hot day, but oh, this dull, cloudy, breezy, thoughtful weather in which the creak of the cricket sounds louder, preparatory to a cheerful storm! How grateful to our feelings is the approach of autumn! We have had no serious storm since spring. What a salad to my spirits is this cooler, darker day! Of late we have had several cloudy days without rain.

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I hear no birds sing these days, only the plaintive note of young bluebirds, or the peep of a robin, or the scream of a jay, to whom all seasons are indifferent, the mew of a catbird, the *link link* of a bobolink, or the twitter of a goldfinch, all faint and rare. The great bittern is still about, but silent and shy. I see where its roost on the pitch pines is betrayed at Tupelo Cliff by the lime-like ordure on the leaves of the bushes beneath. Or a hawk is occasionally seen, etc., etc.

The linear lespedeza is out of bloom at Tupelo Cliff. *Euphorbia hypericifolia* there (July). *Spiranthes cernua* in the meadows. That earliest one I saw was either the *gracilis* or *repens*, probably the first. Again and several times I have found a low hieracium, not a foot high, with radical leaves only and not veined, few-flowered; may be one form of *Gronovii*. That white polygonum of the river is apparently *P. hydropiperoides*, but faintly perforate-spotted; but I cannot find described the smaller, rose-colored one, also perforate-dotted. Some thorn berries, to the eyes similar to the scarlet-fruited, are hard. How many kinds have we? Some are already cutting rowen, which is sweetest and best for milch cows.

At length, before sundown, it begins to rain. You can hardly say when it began, and now, after dark, the sound of it dripping and pattering without is quite cheering. It is long since I heard it. One of those serious and normal storms, not a shower which you can see through, something regular, a fall (?) rain, coincident with a different mood or season of the mind, not a transient cloud that drops rain. Methinks the truly

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weather-wise will know themselves and find the signs of rain in their own moods, the aspect of their own skies or thoughts, and not consult swallows and spiders. I incline always [to] questions about the weather without thinking. Does a mind in sympathy with nature need a hygrometer?

Aug. 26. Rain. Rain.

Aug. 27. It still rains. I am struck by the ease and simplicity with which an Englishman expresses a sentiment of reverence for the Author and Ruler of the Universe. It is very manly, and appears to some extent to characterize the nation. Osborn, in his Arctic Journal, prints with much simplicity a prayer which had been prepared for the Arctic expedition.

P. M. — To Walden.

Storm drawing to a close. Crickets sound much louder after the rain in this cloudy weather. They are beginning to dig potatoes in earnest. Hips of the early roses are reddening. I have not seen a rose for a week or two. Lower leaves of the smooth sumach are red. Hear *chic-a-day-day-day* and crows; but, for music, reduced almost to the winter quire. Young partridges two thirds grown burst away. Globular galls on young oaks, green on one side, red on the other. *Elatine Americana*, small crypta [*?*], in Walden Pond.

Paddled *round* the pond. The shore is composed of a belt of smooth rounded white stones like paving-stones, a rod or two in width, excepting one or two short sand-beaches, and is so steep that much of the way a

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single leap will carry you into water over your head. It is nowhere muddy, and the bottom is not to be touched, scarcely even seen again, except for the transparency of the water, till it rises on the other side. A casual observer would say that there were no weeds at all in it, and of noticeable plants a closer scrutiny detects only a few small heart-leaves and potamogetons, and perchance a water-target or two, which yet even a bather might not perceive. Both fishes and plants are clean and bright, like the element they live in.[1] Viewed from a hilltop, it is blue in the depths and green in the shallows, but from a boat it is seen to be a uniform dark green.[2] I can remember when it was four or five feet higher, also a foot or two lower, than when I lived there. There is a narrow sand-bar running into it in one place, with very deep water on one side, on which I boiled a kettle of chowder, at least six rods from the main shore, more than twenty years ago, which it has not been possible to do since; and my friends used to listen with incredulity when I told them, that a year or two later I was accustomed to fish from a boat in a deep cove in the woods, long since converted into a meadow. But since I left it the pond has risen steadily for a year past, apparently unaffected by drouth or rain, and now, in the summer of '52, is as high as it was twenty years ago, and fishing goes on again in the meadow; and yet the water shed by the surrounding hills is insignificant in amount, and this overflow must be referred to causes which affect the deep springs.[3]

[1] [*Walden*, p. 198; Riv. 279, 280.] [2] [*Walden*, p. 196; Riv. 276.]
[3] [*Walden*, pp. 200, 201; Riv. 283.]

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The surrounding hills are from fifty to a hundred, and in one place perhaps two hundred, feet high, covered with wood.[1]

The bushy gerardia yellows the hilly side, where the wood is cut off on the north side of the pond. Among the effects of the high water, I observe that the alders have thrown out innumerable roots, two feet or more in length, with red extremities, for three feet or more up their stems, or as high as the water stands, which do not seek the ground, but collect sustenance from the water, forming a dense mass. Also the willows and the meadow-sweet in their proportion; but the pitch pines and many other trees are killed. The high blueberries standing in the water bear more and larger berries than usual, and they are still quite fresh.

The berries of the red pyrus are now red in some places. Apparently *Mulgedium leucophæum* by the railroad. *Aster longifolius* (?), handsome, large, bushy, lilac-tinted, apparently the same found the 22d at Jenny's Brook. The leaves of some young maples in the water about the pond are now quite scarlet, running into dark purple-red.

Aug. 28. *Sicyos angulatus*, one-seeded star-cucumber in Aunt's garden, probably in July. *Nepeta Glechoma*, ground ivy, or gill, probably May, now out of bloom. *Bidens chrysanthemoides*, perhaps a day. *Polygonum amphibium* var. *terrestre* with a small spike of large clear rose-colored flowers, flowers rare, probably

[1] [*Walden*, p. 195; Riv. 275.]

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August. What I called by this name before was not this. Now the red osier [1] berries are very handsome along the river, overhanging the water, for the most part pale blue mixed with whitish, — part of the pendant jewelry of the season. The berries of the alternate-leaved cornel have dropped off mostly. The white-berried and red [2] osier are in their prime. The other three kinds I have not seen. The viburnums, *dentatum* and *nudum*, are in their prime. The sweet viburnum not yet purple, and the maple-leaved still yellowish. Hemp still in blossom.

Aug. 29. A warm rain-storm in the night, with wind, and to-day it continues. The first leaves begin to fall; a few yellow ones lie in the road this morning, loosened by the rain and blown off by the wind. The ground in orchards is covered with windfalls; imperfect fruits now fall.

We boast that we belong to the Nineteenth Century, and are making the most rapid strides of any nation. But consider how little this village does for its own culture. We have a comparatively decent system of common schools, schools for infants only, as it were, but, excepting the half-starved Lyceum in the winter, no school for ourselves. It is time that we had uncommon schools, that we did not leave off our education when we begin to be men. Comparatively few of my townsmen evince any interest in their own culture, however much they may boast of the school tax they pay. It is time that villages were universities, and their elder

[1] River cornel. [2] Silky.

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inhabitants the fellows, with leisure — if they are indeed so well off — to pursue liberal studies as long as they live. In this country the village should in many respects take the place of the nobleman who has gone by the board. It should be the patron of the fine arts. It is rich enough; it only wants the refinement. It can spend money enough on such things as farmers value, but it is thought utopian to propose spending money for things which more intelligent men know to be of far more worth. If we live in the Nineteenth Century, why should we not enjoy the advantages which the Nineteenth Century has to offer? Why should our life be in any respect provincial? As the nobleman of cultivated taste surrounds himself with whatever conduces to his culture, — books, paintings, statuary, etc., — so let the village do. This town, — how much has it ever spent directly on its own culture? To act collectively is according to the spirit of our institutions, and I am confident that, as our circumstances are more flourishing, our means are greater. New England can hire all the wise men in the world to come and teach her, and board them round the while, and not be provincial at all. That is the uncommon school we want. The one hundred and twenty-five dollars which is subscribed in this town every winter for a Lyceum is better spent than any other equal sum. Instead of noblemen, let us have noble towns or villages of men. This town has just spent sixteen thousand dollars for a town-house. Suppose it had been proposed to spend an equal sum for something which will tend far more to refine and cultivate its inhabitants, a library, for instance. We have

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sadly neglected our education. We leave it to Harper & Brothers and Redding & Co.[1]

Aug. 30. A cold storm still, — this the third day, — and a fire to keep warm by. This, methinks, is the most serious storm since spring. *Polygonum amphibium* var. *aquaticum*, which is rather rare. I have not seen it in flower. It is floating. Its broad heart-shaped leaves are purplish beneath, like white lily pads, heart-leaves, and water-targets. What is there in the water that colors them? The other variety, which [is] rough and upright, is more common, and its flowers very beautiful.

Aug. 31. *Tuesday.* 9 A.M. — Up river in boat to the bend above the Pantry.

It is pleasant to embark on a voyage, if only for a short river excursion, the boat to be your home for the day, especially if it is neat and dry. A sort of moving studio it becomes, you can carry so many things with you. It is almost as if you put oars out at your windows and moved your house along. A sailor, I see, easily becomes attached to his vessel. How continually we [are] thankful to the boat if it does not leak! We move now with a certain pomp and circumstance, with planetary dignity. The pleasure of sailing is akin to that which a planet feels. It seems a more complete adventure than a walk. We make believe embark our all, — our house and furniture. We are further from the earth than the rider; we receive no jar from it. We can carry many things with us.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 120–122; Riv. 171–173.]

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This high water will retard the blossoming of the *Bidens Beckii*, perhaps. The pads are covered for the most part; only those which have very long stems are on the surface, the white lilies oftenest. Here and there is seen a blue spike of a pontederia still, but I do not see a single white lily. I should think this would put an end to them. It is a bright and breezy day. I hear the note of goldfinches. The shore is whitened in some places with dense fields of the *Polygonum hydropiperoides*, now in its prime, but the smaller rose-colored polygonum, also in blossom, is covered. The mikania still covers the banks, and imparts its fragrance to the whole shore, but it is past its prime, as also is the trumpet-weed. The purple gerardias are very fresh and handsome next the water, behind Hubbard's or Dennis's. I see crows feeding on the meadow, large and black.

I rigged my mast by putting a post across the boat, and putting the mast through it and into a piece of a post at the bottom, and lashing and bracing it, and so sailed most of the way. The water, methinks, has a little of the fall sparkle on it after the rain. It has run over the meadows considerably and drowned the flowers. I feel as if it was a month later than it was a week ago.

A few days ago some saw a circular rainbow about the sun at midday. Singular phenomenon. Is not this the season when conventions are held? Or do they not appoint conventions, temperance or political, at such times as the farmers are most at leisure? There is a silvery light on the washed willows this morning, and the shadows under the wood-sides appear deeper, per-

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chance by contrast, in the brilliant air. Is not the air a little more bracing than it was? Looking up the sparkling river, whose waves are flashing in the sun, it appears to be giving off its pure silver from the amalgam. The sky is more beautiful, a clearer blue, methinks, than for some time past, with light and downy clouds sailing all round a quarter of the way up it. The fields of bulrushes are now conspicuous, being left alone above the water. The balls of the button-bush have lost their bloom. From the shore I hear only the creak of crickets. The winds of autumn begin to blow. Now I can sail. The cardinal-flowers, almost drowned in a foot or two of water, are still very brilliant. The wind is Septemberish. That rush, reed, or sedge with the handsome head rises above the water. I pass boats now far from the shore and full of water. I see and hear the kingfisher with his disproportionate black [*sic*] head or crest. The pigeon woodpecker darts across the valley; a catbird mews in the alders; a great bittern flies sluggishly away from his pine tree perch on Tupelo Cliff, digging his way through the air. These and crows at long intervals are all the birds seen or heard.

How much he knows of the wind, its strength and direction, whose steed it is, — the sailor. With a good gale he advances rapidly; when it dies away he is at a standstill. The very sounds made by moving the furniture of my boat are agreeable, echoing so distinctly and sweetly over the water; they give the sense of being abroad. I find myself *at home* in new scenery. I carry more of myself with me; I am more entirely abroad, as when a man takes his children into the

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fields with him. I carry so many me's with [me]. This large basket of melons, umbrella, flowers, hammer, etc., etc., all go with me to the end of the voyage without being the least incumbrance, and preserve their relative distances. Our capacity to carry our furniture with us is so much increased. There is little danger of overloading the steed. We can go completely equipped to fields a dozen miles off. The tent and the chest can be taken as easily as not. We embark; we go aboard a boat; we sit or we stand. If we sail, there is no exertion necessary. If we move in the opposite direction, we nevertheless progress. And if we row, we sit to an agreeable exercise, akin to flying. A student, of course, if it were perfectly convenient, would always move with his escritoire and his library about him. If you have a cabin and can descend into that, the charm is double.

Landed near the bee tree. A bumblebee on a cow-wheat blossom sounded like the engine's whistle far over the woods; then like an æolian harp. Then walked through the damp, cellar-like, fungus woods, with bare, damp, dead leaves and no bushes for their floor, where the corallorhiza grows, now out of bloom. The fall dandelion yellows the meadows. What is that bird like a large peetweet that flew away with a kind of whistle from a grass spit in the Sudbury meadows? A larger sandpiper? Probably a yellow-legs.

Lunched on Rice's Hill. I see some yellow pumpkins from afar in the field next his house. This sight belongs to the season. It has all clouded up again, so that I scarcely see the sun during the day. I find, on

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bathing, that the water has been made very cold by the rain-storm, so that I soon come out. It must affect the fishes very much.

All the fields and meadows are shorn. I would like to go into perfectly new and wild country where the meadows are rich in decaying and rustling vegetation, present a wilder luxuriance. I wish to lose myself amid reeds and sedges and wild grasses that have not been touched. If haying were omitted for a season or two, a voyage up this river in the fall, methinks, would make a much wilder impression. I sail and paddle to find a place where the bank has a more neglected look. I wish to bury myself amid reeds. I pine for the luxuriant vegetation of the river-banks.

I ramble over the wooded hill on the right beyond the Pantry. The bushy gerardia is now very conspicuous with its great yellow trumpets, on hillsides on sprout-lands. Sometimes you come upon a large field of them. The buds or closed tubes are as handsome, at least, as the flowers. The various kinds of lespedezas are now in bloom. The panicled desmodium is going to seed and adheres to the clothes, with only a few flowers left. The strong contrast of the bright-pink (hard) and blue (soft and ripe) berries of the *Viburnum nudum*. Here are some irregularly globular or apple-shaped and larger than the common, which are more elliptical. The rustling of aspen leaves (*grandidentata*) this cloudy day startled me as if it were rain-drops on the leaves. Here are great pyrus berries in dense clusters falling over in wreaths and actually blackening the ground. I have rarely seen any kind of berries so

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thick. As big as small cherries. The great *Bidens chrysanthemoides*, now in blossom, like a sunflower, two inches in diameter, is for the most part far under water, blossoms and all. I see its drowned flowers far beneath the surface. Gunners out with their pants tucked into their boots. Pigeons fly over, and ducks. Poke berries ripe for some time. The various beauties of this plant now appear. Its stem is ripe, too, as if full of purple wine. It is so florid that the whole plant blossoms. In the fall, after so much sun, all leaves turn to petals and blossoms. The evening of the year is colored like the sunset. *Utricularia inflata*, or whorled bladderwort, numerous in Fair Haven Pond. I found it the same day of the month last year. I plucked a white lily pad above Lee's Bridge, nine inches in diameter.

Landed at Lee's Cliff, in Fair Haven Pond, and sat on the Cliff. Late in the afternoon. The wind is gone down; the water is smooth; a serene evening is approaching; the clouds are dispersing; the sun has shone once or twice, but is now in a cloud. The pond, so smooth and full of reflections after a dark and breezy day, is unexpectedly beautiful. There is a little boat on it, schooner-rigged, with three sails, a perfect little vessel and perfectly reflected now in the water. It is sufficient life for the pond. Being in the reflection of the opposite woods, the water on which it rests (for there is hardly a puff of air, and the boatman is only airing his sails after the storm) is absolutely invisible; only the junction of the reflections shows where it must be, and it makes an agreeable impression of buoyancy and lightness as of a feather. The broad, dense, and now

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lower and flatter border of button-bushes, having water on both sides, is very rich and moss-like, seen from this height, with an irregular outline, being flooded while verdurous. The sky is reflected on both sides, and no finer edging can be imagined. A sail is, perhaps, the largest white object that can be admitted into the landscape. It contrasts well with the water, and is the most agreeable of regular forms. If they were shaped like houses, they would be disagreeable. The very mists which rise from the water are also white.

It is worth the while to have had a cloudy, even a stormy, day for an excursion, if only that you are out at the clearing up. The beauty of the landscape is the greater, not only by reason of the contrast with its recent lowering aspect, but because of the greater freshness and purity of the air and of vegetation, and of the repressed and so recruited spirits of the beholder. Sunshine is nothing to be observed or described, but when it is seen in patches on the hillsides, or suddenly bursts forth with splendor at the end of a storm. I derive pleasure now from the shadows of the clouds diversifying the sunshine on the hills, where lately all was shadow. The spirits of the cows at pasture on this very hillside appear excited. They are restless from a kind of joy, and are not content with feeding. The weedy shore is suddenly blotted out by this rise of waters.

I saw a small hawk fly along under the hillside and alight on the ground, its breast and belly pure downy white. It was a very handsome bird. Though they are not fitted to walk much on the ground, but to soar,

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yet its feet, which are but claws to seize its prey and hold to its perch, are handsome appendages, and it is a very interesting sight on the ground. Yet there is a certain unfitness in so fair a breast, so pure white, made to breast nothing less pure than the sky or clouds, coming so nearly in contact with the earth. Never bespattered with the mud of earth. That was the impression made on me, — of a very pure breast, accustomed to float on the sky, in contact with the earth. It stood quite still, watching me, as if it was not easy for it to walk.

I forgot to say that I saw nighthawks sailing about in the middle of the day. The barberries are red in some places. Methinks I am in better spirits and physical health now that melons are ripe, *i. e.* for three weeks past. I hear the sound of a flail. The clouds do not entirely disperse, but, since it is decidedly fair and serene, I am contented.

I float slowly down from Fair Haven till I have passed the bridge. The sun, half an hour high, has come out again just before setting, with a brilliant, warm light, and there is the slightest undulation discernible on the water, from the boat or other cause, as it were its imitation in glass. The reflections are perfect. A bright, fresh green on fields and trees now after the rain, spring-like with the sense of summer past. The reflections are the more perfect for the blackness of the water. I see the down of a thistle, probably, in the air, descending to the water two or three rods off, which I mistake for a man in his shirt sleeves descending a distant hill, by an ocular delusion. How fair the smooth green swells

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of those low grassy hills on which the sunlight falls! Indian hills.

This is the most glorious part of this day, the serenest, warmest, brightest part, and the most suggestive. Evening is fairer than morning. It is chaste eve, for it has sustained the trials of the day, but to the morning such praise was inapplicable. It is incense-breathing. Morning is full of promise and vigor. Evening is pensive. The serenity is far more remarkable to those who are on the water. That part of the sky just above the horizon seen reflected, apparently, some rods off from the boat is as light a blue as the actual, but it goes on deepening as your eye draws nearer to the boat, until, when you look directly down at the reflection of the zenith, it is lost in the blackness of the water. It passes through all degrees of dark blue, and the threatening aspect of a cloud is very much enhanced in the reflection. As I wish to be on the water at sunset, I let the boat float. I enjoy now the warmth of summer with some of the water prospect of spring. Looking westward, the surface of the water on the meadows in the sun has a slight dusty appearance, with clear black lines, as if some water nymph had written "slut" with her finger there.

A flock of half a dozen or more blue-winged teal, scared up down-stream behind me, as I was rowing, have circled round to reconnoitre and cross up-stream before me, quite close. I had seen another flock of ducks high in the air in the course of the day. Have ducks then begun to return?

I observe, on the willows on the east shore, the

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shadow of my boat and self and oars, upside down, and, I believe, it is joined to the same right side up, but the branches are so thin there that that shadow is not perfect. There goes a great bittern *plodding* home over the meadows at evening, to his perch on some tree by the shore. The rain has washed the leaves clean where he perches. There stands another in the meadow just like a stake, or the point of a stump or root. Its security was consulted both in its form and color. The latter is a sober brown, pale on the breast, as the less exposed side of a root might be; and its attitude is accidental, too, bent forward and *perfectly* motionless. Therefore there is no change in appearance but such as can be referred to the motion of the sailor.

Eupatorium sessilifolium, not yet fully open, — a week or ten days ago must have been the earliest, — Lee's Cliff. *Solidago cæsia*, blue-stemmed, not long. Waxwork berries orange now, not open. What mean the different forms of apocynum leaves? Have we more than one species? The fruit of the triosteum is orange-colored now at Tupelo Cliff. *Polygonum tenue*, slender (I should say upright) knot-grass, there, too (July?). *Polygonum dumetorum*, climbing false-buckwheat. Apparently *Bidens cernua* (?), but is it nodding, and are not its leaves ever trifid? Its achenia are not obovate. Were the pods of my corallorhiza long enough to be the *multiflora*? *Vide* that small lespedeza-like plant at Tupelo Cliff.

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V

SEPTEMBER, 1852

(ÆT. 35)

Sept. 1. *Wednesday.* Some tragedy, at least some dwelling on, or even exaggeration of, the tragic side of life is necessary for contrast or relief to the picture. The genius of the writer may be such a colored glass as Gilpin describes, the use of which is "to give a greater depth to the shades; by which the effect is shown with more force." The whole of life is seen by some through this darker medium, — partakes of the tragic, — and its bright and splendid lights become thus lurid.

4 P. M. — To Walden.

Paddling over it, I see large schools of perch only an inch long, yet easily distinguished by their transverse bars. Great is the beauty of a wooded shore seen from the water, for the trees have ample room to expand on that side, and each puts forth its most vigorous bough to fringe and adorn the pond. It is rare that you see so natural an edge to the forest. Hence a pond like this, surrounded by hills wooded down to the edge of the water, is the best place to observe the tints of the autumnal foliage. Moreover, such as stand in or near to the water change earlier than elsewhere.

This is a very warm and serene evening, and the surface of the pond is perfectly smooth except where

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the skaters dimple it, for at equal intervals they are scattered over its whole extent, and, looking west, they make a fine sparkle in the sun. Here and there is a thistle(?)-down floating on its surface, which the fishes dart at, and dimple the water,[1] — delicate hint of approaching autumn, when the first thistle-down descends on some smooth lake's surface, full of reflections, in the woods, sign to the fishes of the ripening year. These white faery vessels are annually wafted over the cope of their sky. Bethink thyself, O man, when the first thistle-down is in the air. Buoyantly it floated high in air over hills and fields all day, and now, weighed down with evening dews, perchance, it sinks gently to the surface of the lake. Nothing can stay the thistle-down, but with September winds it unfailingly sets sail. The irresistible revolution of time. It but comes down upon the sea in its ship, and is still perchance wafted to the shore with its delicate sails. The thistle-down is in the air. Tell me, is thy fruit also there? Dost thou approach maturity? Do gales shake windfalls from thy tree? But I see no dust here as on the river.

Some of the leaves of the rough hawkweed are purple now, especially beneath.

I see a yet smoother, darker water, separated from this abruptly, as if by an invisible cobweb resting on the surface.[2] I view it from Heywood's Peak. How rich and autumnal the haze which blues the distant hills and fills the valleys. The lakes look better in this haze, which confines our view more to their reflected

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 197, 206, 207; Riv. 278, 291–293.]

[2] [*Walden*, p. 208; Riv. 293.]

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heavens and makes the shore-line more indistinct. Viewed from the hilltop, it reflects the color of the sky. Some have referred the vivid greenness next the shores to the reflection of the verdure, but it is equally green there against the railroad sand-bank and in the spring before the leaves are expanded. Beyond the deep reflecting surface, near the shore, where the bottom is seen, it is a vivid green.[1] I see two or three small maples already scarlet, across the pond, beneath where the white stems of three birches diverge, at the point of a promontory next the water, a distinct scarlet tint a quarter of a mile off. Ah, many a tale their color tells of Indian times — and autumn wells [?] — primeval dells.[2] The beautifully varied shores of Walden, — the western indented with deep bays, the bold northern shore, the gracefully sweeping curve of the eastern, and above all the beautifully scalloped southern shore, where successive capes overlap each other and suggest unexplored coves between. Its shore is just irregular enough not to be monotonous. From this peak I can see a fish leap in almost any part of the pond, for not a pickerel or shiner picks an insect from this smooth surface but it manifestly disturbs the equilibrium of the lake. It is wonderful with what elaborateness this simple fact is advertised. This piscine murder will out, and from my distant perch I distinguish the circling undulations when they are now half a dozen rods in diameter.[3] Methinks I distinguish

[1] [*Walden*, p. 196; Riv. 276, 277.]
[2] [*Walden*, p. 265; Riv. 372.]
[3] [*Walden*, p. 208; Riv. 293.]

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Fair Haven Pond from this point, elevated by a mirage in its seething valley, like a coin in a basin.[1] They cannot fatally injure Walden with an axe, for they have done their worst and failed. We see things in the reflection which we do not see in the substance. In the reflected woods of Pine Hill there is a vista through which I see the sky, but I am indebted to the water for this advantage, for from this point the actual wood affords no such vista.

Bidens connata (?) not quite out. I see the *Hieracium venosum* still, but slightly veined. Have I not made another species of this variety? *Aster undulatus* (?), like a many-flowered *amplexicaulis*, with leaves narrowed below, a few days. *Amphicarpæa monoica*, like the ground-nut, but ternate, out of bloom; probably July or August. Pods just forming. *Desmodium rotundifolium* just going out of bloom. Last two, side of Heywood's Peak.

Gilpin, who is usually so correct, standing at the head of Loch Fyne in Scotland, which he describes as "a bay of salt water, sixty or seventy fathoms deep, four miles in breadth," and about fifty miles long, surrounded by mountains, observes: "If we could have seen it immediately after the diluvian crash, or whatever convulsion of nature occasioned it, before the waters gushed in, what a horrid chasm must it have appeared!

> "So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
> Down sunk a hollow bottom, broad, and deep,
> Capacious bed of waters ——."[2]

[1] [This sentence is queried in the margin.]

[2] [William Gilpin, *Observations on the Highlands of Scotland.*]

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But if we apply these proportions to Walden, which, as we have seen, appears already in a *transverse* section like a shallow plate, it will appear four times as shallow. So much for the increased horrors of the emptied chasm of Loch Fyne. No doubt many a smiling valley with its extended fields of corn occupies exactly such a "horrid chasm," from which the waters have receded, though it requires the insight of the geologist to convince the unsuspicious inhabitants of the fact. Most ponds, being emptied, would leave a meadow no more hollow than we frequently see. I have seen many a village situated in the midst of a plain which the geologist has at length affirmed must have been levelled by water, where the observing eye might still detect the shores of a lake in the horizon, and no subsequent elevation of the plain was necessary to conceal the fact.[1]

Thus it is only by emphasis and exaggeration that real effects are described. What Gilpin says in another place is perfectly applicable to this case; though he says that that which he is about to disclose is so bold a truth, "that it ought only, perhaps, to be opened to the initiated." "In the exhibition of distant mountains on paper, or canvas," says he, "unless you make them exceed their *real* or *proportional* size, they have no effect. It is inconceivable how objects lessen by distance. Examine any distance, closed by mountains, in a camera, and you will easily see what a poor, diminutive appearance the mountains make. By the power of perspective they are lessened to nothing. Should

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 317, 318; Riv. 443, 444.]

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you represent them in your landscape in so diminutive a form, all dignity, and grandeur of idea would be lost."

Sept. 2. P. M. — To Walden.

The seringo, too, has long been silent like other birds. The red prinos berries ripe in sunny places. Rose hips begin to be handsome. Small flocks of pigeons are seen these days. Distinguished from doves by their sharper wings and bodies. August has been a month of berries and melons, small fruits. First in the descent from summer's culminating-point. There is a stillness in nature for want of singing birds, commenced a month or more ago; only the crickets' louder creak to supply their place. I have not heard a bullfrog this long time. The small cornel, or bunch-berry, is in bloom now (!!) near the pond. What great tuft-like masses the cow-wheat makes now in sprout-lands!

As I look over the pond now from the eastern shore, I am obliged to employ both my hands to defend my eyes against the reflected as well as the true sun, for they appear equally bright; and between my hands I look over the smooth and glassy surface of the lake. The skaters make the finest imaginable sparkle. Otherwise it is literally as smooth as glass, except where a fish leaps into the air or a swallow dips beneath its surface. Sometimes a fish describes an arc of three or four feet in the air, and there is a bright flash where it emerges and another where it strikes the water.[1] A slight haze at this season makes the shore-line so much

[1] [*Walden*, p. 207; Riv. 292, 293.]

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the more indistinct. Looking across the pond from the Peak toward Fair Haven, which I seem to see, all the earth beyond appears insulated and floated, even by this small sheet of water, the heavens being seen reflected, as it were beneath it, so that it looks thin.

The scenery of this small pond is humble though very beautiful, and does not approach to grandeur, nor can it much concern one who has not long frequented it, or lived by its shore.[1]

Sept. 3. 1 A. M., moon waning, to Conantum.

A warm night. A thin coat sufficient. I hear an apple fall, as I go along the road. Meet a man going to market thus early. There are no mists to diversify the night. Its features are very simple. I hear no whip-poor-will or other bird. See no fireflies. Saw a whip-poor-will (?) flutter across the road. Hear the dumping sound of frogs on the river meadow, and occasionally a kind of croak as from a bittern there. It is very dewy, and I bring home much mud on my shoes. This is a peculiarity of night, — its dews, water resuming its reign. Return before dawn. Morning and evening are more attractive than midnight.

I will endeavor to separate the tide in my thoughts, or what is due to the influence of the moon, from the current distractions and fluctuations. The winds which the sun has aroused go down at evening, and the lunar influence may then perchance be detected.

Of late I have not heard the wood thrush.

[1] [*Walden*, p. 195; Riv. 275.]

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Sept. 5. P. M. — To Cliffs.

The petals of the purple gerardia strew the brooks. The oval spikes of somewhat pear-shaped berries of the arum perhaps vermilion-color now; its scapes bent to the ground. These by their color must have caught an Indian's eye. The brooks are full of red rootlets of the alder, etc. The country begins to have a dry and *flavid* look, — corn-fields, grass-fields, etc., — and when winds blow, a slight rustling is heard. I observed minute red maples, on the shore near water, only an inch high, completely turned red. I have noticed the thistle-down now for some days in the air, not yet the milkweed, though some flowers of the thistle are still seen. Some galls on the oak an inch in diameter like Castile soap balls, quite handsome. Some smaller and redder, with watered zones. Interesting kind of parasitic fruits, not so handsome, perchance, as the pincushion galls of the spring. What is that bidens now just blossomed, rough-stemmed or bristly, with undivided, lanceolate, serrate, and strongly connate leaves, short but conspicuous rays, achenia four-awned and downwardly barbed? [1]

Sept. 6. *Monday.* To Peterboro. Railroad to Mason Village.

Observed from cars at 7.30 A. M. the dew, or fog rather, on the fine grass in meadows, — a dirty white, which, one of these mornings, will be frozen to a white frost. A woman who wished to go to Nashua was left behind at Groton Junction, — to which she said, "Why,

[1] *B. cernua.*

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I was *he-ar*." Girls picking hops in Townsend. Some fields are completely yellow — one mass of yellow — from the solidago. It is the prevailing flower the traveller sees. Walked from Mason Village over the mountain-*tops* to Peterboro. Saw, sailing over Mason Village about 10 A. M., a white-headed and *white-tailed* eagle with black wings, — a grand sight. The "doubly compound racemed panicles" of the spikenard berries, varnish-colored berries, or color of varnished mahogany. Met a crazy man, probably being carried to a hospital, who must take us both by the hand and tell us how the spirit of God had descended on him and given him all the world, and he was going to make every man a present of half a million, etc., etc. High blackberries by the roadside abundant still, the long, sweet, mulberry-shaped ones, mostly confined to the road, and very grateful to the walker. A stone by the roadside in Temple, whitewashed, with an inscription in black, evincing the vulgarity of the Yankees, "Here Jesse Spofford was killed," etc., etc., not telling how. Thus we record only the trivial, not the important event, as the advent of a thought. Who cares whether Jesse Spofford was killed or not, if he does not know whether he was worthy to live?

The tavern-keeper at Temple said the summit just south of the Peterboro road, covered with wood, was the highest (probably a mistake), — 980 feet above Temple Common, which is itself very high. Went across lots from here toward this. When part way up, or on a lower part of the ridge, discovered it was not the highest, and turned northward across the road to what

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is apparently the highest, first having looked south to Kidder's mountain, between New Ipswich and Temple and further west and quite near to Boundary Mountain between Sharon and Temple. Already we had had experience of a mountain-side covered with bare rocks, as if successive thunder [*sic*] spouts had burst over it, and bleached timber lying across the rocks, the woodbine red as blood about a tall stump, and the strong, sweet, bracing scent of ferns between the rocks, the raspberry bushes still retaining a few berries. They usually tell you how many mountain-houses you can see from a mountain, but they are interesting to me in proportion to the number you cannot see. We went down the west side of this first mountain, from whose summit we could not see west on account of another ridge; descended far, and across the road, and up the southernmost of what I have called the Peterboro Hills. The raw edge of a forest of canoe birches on the side of this hill was remarkable on account of the wonderful contrast of the white stems with the green leaves; the former glaringly white, as if whitewashed and varnished or polished. You now hear that grating, creaking flight of the grasshopper. There is something in the aspect of the evergreens, the dwarfed forests and the bare rocks of mountain-tops, and the scent of the ferns, stern yet sweet to man. Hazy. Monadnock would probably look better toward evening. It was now two or three P. M. In the woods near the top, the *Viburnum lantanoides*, hobble-bush, American wayfaring-tree, in fruit, mostly large and red, but the ripe dark blue or black like the *V. nudum*, — what I have

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formerly falsely called moose-berry. Probably it does not grow in Concord.

Went, still across lots, to Peterboro village, which we could not see from the mountain. But first we had seen the Lyndeboro Mountain, north of these two, — partly in Greenfield, — and further Crotched Mountain, and in the northeast Uncannunuc. Descended where, as usual, the forest had been burned formerly, — tall bleached masts still standing, making a very wild and agreeably [*sic*] scenery, — keeping on a westward spur or side, that we might see north and south. Saw the pond on the " embenchement " between the two mountains. Some sheep ran from us in great fear. Others put their heads down and together, and stood *perfectly still*, resembling rocks, so that I did not notice them at first. Did they not do it for concealment? After we got down, the prevailing trees were hemlock, spruce, black and yellow birch, and beech, the ground very cleanly and smoothly carpeted with the old leaves of the last two especially, without weeds. Saw some ground-hemlock with some fruit still. Had seen on the hill *Polygonum cilinode*, running polygonum, but no flŏwer, — *alias* fringe-jointed false-buckwheat.

A man in Peterboro told me that his father told him that Monadnock used to be covered with forest, that fires ran through it and killed the turf; then the trees were blown down, and their roots turned up and formed a dense and impenetrable thicket in which the wolves abounded. They came down at night, killed sheep, etc., and returned to their dens, whither they could not be pursued, before morning; till finally they set fire to

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this thicket, and it made the greatest fire they had ever had in the county, and drove out all the wolves, which have not troubled them since. He himself had seen one wolf killed there when he was a boy. They kill now raccoons, hedgehogs, and wildcats there. I thought that I did not see so great a proportion of forest from their hilltops as about Concord, to which they agreed. I should say their hills were uncommonly rocky, — more stone than soil.

Sept. 7. Tuesday, Went, across lots still, to Monadnock, the base some half-dozen miles in a straight line from Peterboro, — six or seven miles. (It had been eleven miles (*by road*) from Mason Village to Peterboro.) My clothes sprinkled with ambrosia pollen. Saw near the mountain a field of turnips whose leaves, all but the midribs, were eaten up by grasshoppers and looked white over the field, and sometimes the turnips were eaten also. Joe Eavely's, the house nearest the top, that we saw under the east side, a small red house a little way up. The summit hardly more than a mile distant in a straight line, but about two miles as they go. Bunch-berries everywhere now. *Acer Pennsylvanicum*, striped maple or moosewood or striped dogwood, but no keys to be seen, — a very large-leaved, three-lobed maple with a handsome striped bark. This, I believe, the Indians smoke. Also *Acer spicatum*, mountain maple, with upright racemes in fruit. Between the rocks on the summit, an abundance of large and fresh blueberries still, apparently *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum*, very large, fresh and cooling to eat, supply-

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ing the place of water. They said they did not get ripe so early as below, but at any rate they last much longer; both, perhaps, because of the greater coolness of the atmosphere. Though this vegetation was very humble, yet it was very productive of fruit. In one little hollow between the rocks grew blueberries, choke-berries, bunch-berries, *red* cherries, wild currants (*Ribes prostratum*, with the berry the odor of skunk-cabbage, but a not quite disagreeable wild flavor), a few raspberries still, holly berries, mountain cranberries (*Vaccinium Vitis-Idæa*), all close together. The little soil on the summit between the rocks was covered with the *Potentilla tridentata*, now out of bloom, the prevailing plant at the extreme summit. Mountain-ash berries also.

Descending toward Troy, a little after 1 P. M., plucked the *Trillium erythrocarpum* with the large red berry, painted trillium. The *Aster acuminatus*, with its leaves in a whorl, white; methinks we may have it. When we had got down, we could see that the mountain had spurs or buttresses on every side, by whose ridge you might ascend. It is an interesting feature in a mountain. I have noticed that they will send out these buttresses every way from their centre.

Were on the top of the mountain at 1 P. M. The cars left Troy, four or five miles off, at three. We reached the depot, by running at last, at the same instant the cars did, and reached Concord at a quarter after five, *i. e.* four hours from the time we were picking blueberries on the mountain, with the plants of the mountain fresh in my hat.

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Sept. 8. Grapes ripe on the Assabet for some days. *Gentiana saponaria* out. Carrion-flower berries ripe for some days. *Polygala verticillata* still, on left side of road beyond Lee place. I put it with the other polygalas in July. Do I perceive the shadows lengthen already?

Sept. 9. There are enough who will flatter me with sweet words, and anon use bitter ones to balance them, but they are not my friends. Simple sincerity and truth are rare indeed. One acquaintance criticises me to my face, expecting every moment that I will become his friend to pay for it. I hear my acquaintance thinking his criticism aloud. We love to talk with those who can make a good guess at us, not with those who talk to us as if we were somebody else all the while. Our neighbors invite us to be amiable toward their vices. How simple is the law of love! One who loves us acts accordingly, and anon we come together and succeed together without let or hindrance.

Yesterday and to-day have felt about as hot as any weather this year. The potato-balls lie ripe in the fields. The groundsel down is in the air. The last day of August I saw a sharp-nosed green grasshopper. The goldenrods resound with the hum of bees and other insects. Methinks the little leaves now springing, which I have called mullein, must be fragrant everlasting (?). I believe that I occasionally hear a hylodes within a day or two. In front of Cæsar's, the *Crotalaria sagittalis*, rattle-pod, still in bloom, though the seeds are ripe; probably began in July. Also by Cæsar's well, *Liatris*

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scariosa, handsome rose-purple, with the aspect of a Canada thistle at a distance, or a single vernonia. Referred to August. Ah! the beauty of the liatris bud just bursting into bloom, the rich fiery rose-purple, like that of the sun at his rising. Some call it button snake-root. Those crotalaria pods would make pretty playthings for children.

Sept. 11. Genius is like the snapping-turtle born with a great developed head. They say our brain at birth is one sixth the weight of the body.

Cranberries are being raked for fear of frosts. These fall rains are a peculiarity of the season. How much fresher some flowers look in rainy weather! When I thought they were about done, they appear to revive, and moreover their beauty is enhanced, as if by the contrast of the louring atmosphere with their bright colors. Such are the purple gerardia and the *Bidens cernua*. The purple gerardia and blue-curls are interesting for their petals strewn about, beaten down by the rain. Many a brook I look into is strewn with the purple petals of the gerardia, whose stalk is not obvious in the bank. Again the *Potentilla Canadensis* var. *pumila*, and dandelions occasionally.

Sept. 13. Yesterday it rained all day, with considerable wind, which has strewn the ground with apples and peaches, and, all the country over, people are busy picking up the windfalls. More leaves also have fallen. Rain has as much to do with it as wind. Rode round through Lincoln and a part of Weston and Wayland.

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The barberries, now red and reddening, begin to show. Asters, various shades of blue, and especially the smaller kinds of *dense-flowering white ones*, are more than ever by the roadsides. The great bidens in the sun in brooks affects me as the rose of the fall, the most *flavid* product of the water and the sun. They are low suns in the brook. The golden glow of autumn concentrated, more golden than the sun. How surely this yellow comes out along the brooks when you have applied the chemical test of autumn air to it! It yellows along the brook. The earth wears different colors or liveries at different seasons. If I come by at this season, a golden blaze will salute me here from a thousand suns.

How earnestly and rapidly each creature, each flower, is fulfilling its part while its day lasts! Nature never lost a day, nor a moment. As the planet in its orbit and around its axis, so do the seasons, so does time, revolve, with a rapidity inconceivable. In the moment, in the æon, well employed, time ever advances with this rapidity. To an idler the man employed is terribly rapid. He that is not behind his time is swift. The immortals are swift. Clear the track! The plant that waited a whole year, and then blossomed the instant it was ready and the earth was ready for it, without the conception of delay, was rapid. To the conscience of the idle man, the stillness of a placid September day sounds like the din and whirl of a factory. Only employment can still this din in the air.

In my ride I experienced the pleasure of coming into a landscape where there was more distance and a bluish

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tinge in the horizon. I am not contented long with such narrow valleys that all is greenness in them. I wish to see the earth translated, the green passing into blue. How this heaven intervenes and tinges our more distant prospects! The farther off the mountain which is the goal of our enterprise, the more of heaven's tint it wears. This is the chief value of a distance in landscapes.

I must walk more with free senses. It is as bad to *study* stars and clouds as flowers and stones. I must let my senses wander as my thoughts, my eyes see without looking. Carlyle said that how to observe was to look, but I say that it is rather to see, and the more you look the less you will observe. I have the habit of attention to such excess that my senses get no rest, but suffer from a constant strain. Be not preoccupied with looking. Go not to the object; let it come to you. When I have found myself ever looking down and confining my gaze to the flowers, I have thought it might be well to get into the habit of observing the clouds as a corrective; but no! that study would be just as bad. What I need is not to look at all, but a true sauntering of the eye.

Sept. 14. This morning the first frost. Yet the 10th was one of the warmest days in the year. Methinks it is the *Amaranthus hypochondriacus*, prince's-feather, with "bright red-purple flowers" and sanguine stem, on Emerson's muck-heap in the Turnpike, and the *Polygonum orientale*, prince's-feather, in E. Hosmer's grounds. Blue vervain still. The grass is very green

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after the rains, like a second spring, and, in my ride yesterday, the under sides of the willows, etc., in the wind, the leaves of the fall growth perhaps, reminded me of June. Is not the colder and frosty weather thus introduced by a rain? *i. e.* it clears up cold.

Sept. 16. *Thursday.* 8 A. M. — To Fair Haven Pond.

Since the rains and the sun, great fungi, six inches in diameter, stand in the woods, warped upward on their edges, showing their gills, so as to hold half a gill of water.

The two-leaved convallaria berries are now decidedly red. The sweet-fern has a russet look. The jay screams; the goldfinch twitters; the barberries are red. I heard a warbling vireo in the village, which I have not heard for long, and the common *che-wink* note in the woods. Some birds, like some flowers, begin to sing again in the fall. The corn is topped.

The rippled blue surface of Fair Haven from the Cliffs, with its smooth white border where weeds preserve the surface smooth, a placid silver-plated rim. The pond is like the sky with a border of whitish clouds in the horizon. Yesterday it rained all day.

What makes this such a day for hawks? There are eight or ten in sight from the Cliffs, large and small, one or more with a white rump. I detected the transit of the first, by his shadow on the rock, and I look toward the sun for him. Though he is made light beneath to conceal him, his shadow betrays him. A hawk must get out of the wood, must get above it, where he can sail. It is narrow dodging for him amid the boughs.

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He cannot be a hawk there, but only perch gloomily. Now I see a large one — perchance an eagle, I say to myself! — down in the valley, circling and circling, higher and wider. This way he comes. How beautiful does he repose on the air, in the moment when he is directly over you, and you see the form and texture of his wings! How light he must make himself, how much earthy heaviness expel, before he can thus soar and sail! He carries no useless clogs there with him. They are out by families; while one is circling this way, another circles that; kites without strings. Where is the boy that flies them? Are not the hawks most observed at this season?

Before this, probably no leaves have been affected by frost. The puffballs (?), five to eight fingered, now. Tobacco-pipe still, and the water parsnip. Discovered an excellent lively wild red grape. Why not propagate from it and call it the *Musketaquid?* Gathered some sound blueberries still. Mitchella berries ripe. Dogsbane still. What I have called the *Cornus circinata* is that of Emerson, if you call the fruit white tinged with blue (in Laurel Glen), but its cyme is not flat, as Gray says. Its berries to-day. I suspect that my *C. stolonifera* is the *sericea.* Maple-leaved viburnum berries, dark-bluish.

The Norwegians, the Normen [*sic*], were such inveterate mariners that they called the summit of the mountain chain which separates Norway from Sweden the Keel Ridge of the country, as if it were a vessel turned up.[1]

[1] [See *Journal*, vol. iii, p. 201.]

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Sept. 17. What produces this flashing air of autumn? — a brightness as if there were not green enough to absorb the light, now that the first frosts wither the herbs. The corn-stalks are stacked like muskets along the fields. The pontederia leaves are sere and brown along the river. The fall is further advanced in the water, as the spring was earlier there. I should say that the vegetation of the river was a month further advanced in its decay than of the land generally. The yellow lily pads are apparently decayed generally; as I wade, I tread on their great roots only; and the white lily pads are thinned. Now, before any effects of the frost are obvious on the leaves, I observe two black rows of dead pontederia in the river. Is it the alder locust that rings so loud in low land now? The umbel-shaped smilax berry clusters are now ripe. Still the oxalis blows, and yellow butterflies are on the flowers. I hear the downy woodpecker whistle, and see him looking about the apple trees as if to bore him a hole. Are they returning south? Abundance of wild grapes.

I laid down some wild red grapes in front of the Cliffs, three united to a two-thirds-inch stock, many feet from the root, under an alder *marked* with two or three small sticks atop, and, ten feet north, two more of different stocks, one-half inch diameter, directly on the edge of the brook, their tops over the water, the shell of a five-inch log across them.

Sept. 18. I think it must be the *Cornus sericea* which I have called the *stolonifera*. *Vide* that red stem on the Bear Hill road. The poor student begins now to seek

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the sun. In the forenoons I move into a chamber on the east side of the house, and so follow the sun round. It is agreeable to stand in a new relation to the sun. They begin to have a fire occasionally below-stairs.

3.30 P. M. — A-barberrying to Flint's Pond.

The goldenrods have generally lost their brightness. Methinks the asters were in their prime four or five days ago. Came upon a nighthawk on the ground in Thrush Alley. There are many large toadstools, pecked apparently by birds. I find the Castile soap gall still under the oaks. The robins of late fly in flocks, and I hear them oftener. The partridges, grown up, oftener burst away. Pennyroyal still in bloom. The crows congregate and pursue me through the half-covered woodland path, cawing loud and angrily above me, and when they cease, I hear the winnowing sound of their wings. What ragged ones! Water lobelia still in blossom. Gratiola, horned utricularia, and the white globose flower by Flint's still. Is that the *Cirsium muticum*, four feet high, in the blue-stemmed goldenrod path, with a glutinous involucre, but I should say spinous? The prinos berries now quite red. How densely they cover the bushes! Very handsome, contrasting with the leaves. The barberries are not wholly reddened yet. How much handsomer in fruit for being bent down in wreaths by the weight! The increasing weight of the fruits adds gracefulness to the form of the bush. I get my hands full of thorns, but my basket full of berries. How productive a barberry bush! On each the berries seem more abundant and plumper than on the last. They stand amid the cedars. Coming home by the

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pond road, I see and smell the grapes on trees, under the dense bowers made by their leaves in trees, three feet above the water or the road. The purple clusters hang at that height and scent the air. They impart a sense of tropical richness to our zone. I hear little warbling sparrows in the garden, which apparently have come from the north. Now-a-nights there are fogs pretty extensive in the evening.

Sophia has come from Bangor and brought the *Dalibarda repens*, white dalibarda, a little crenate-rounded-heart-shaped-leafed flower of damp woods; the small-leaved *Geranium Carolinianum;* etc.

Sept. 19. P. M. — To Great Meadows.

The red capsules of the sarothra. Many large crickets about on the sand. Observe the effects of frost in particular places. Some blackberry vines are very red. I see the oxalis and the tree primrose and the Norway cinquefoil and the prenanthes and the *Epilobium coloratum* and the cardinal-flower and the small hypericum and yarrow, and I think it is the *Ranunculus repens*, between Ripley Hill and river, with spotted leaves lingering still. The soapwort gentian cheers and surprises, — solid bulbs of blue from the shade, the stale grown purplish. It abounds along the river, after so much has been mown. The polygala and the purple gerardia are still common and attract by their high color. The small-flowering *Bidens cernua* (?) and the fall dandelion and the fragrant everlasting abound. The *Viola lanceolata* has blossomed again, and the lambkill. What pretty six-fingered leaves the three oxalis leafets make! I see

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the effects of frost on the *Salix Purshiana*, imbrowning their masses; and in the distance is a maple or two by the water, beginning to blush.

That small, slender-leaved, rose-tinted (white petals, red calyx) polygonum by the river is perhaps in its prime now; slender spikes and slender lanceolate sessile leaves, with rent hairy and ciliate sheaths, eight stamens, and three styles united in middle. Not biting. I cannot find it described. And what is that white flower which I should call *Cicuta maculata*, except that the veins do not terminate in the sinuses?

Sept. 20. The smooth sumachs are turning conspicuously and generally red, apparently from frost, and here and there is a whole maple tree red, about water. In some hollows in sprout-lands, the grass and ferns are crisp and brown from frost. I suppose it is the *Aster undulatus*, or variable aster, with a large head of middle-sized blue flowers. The *Viola sagittata* has blossomed again. The *Galium circæzans* (?) still, and narrow-leaved johnswort.

On Heywood's Peak by Walden. — The surface is not *perfectly* smooth, on account of the zephyr, and the reflections of the woods are a little indistinct and blurred. How soothing to sit on a stump on this height, overlooking the pond, and study the dimpling circles which are incessantly inscribed and again erased on the smooth and otherwise invisible surface, amid the reflected skies! The reflected sky is of a deeper blue. How beautiful that over this vast expanse there can be no disturbance, but it is thus at once gently smoothed

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away and assuaged, as, when a vase of water is jarred, the trembling circles seek the shore and all is smooth again! Not a fish can leap or an insect fall on it but it is reported in lines of beauty, in circling dimples, as it were the constant welling up of its fountain, the gentle pulsing of its life, the heaving of its breast. The thrills of joy and those of pain are indistinguishable. How sweet the phenomena of the lake! Everything that moves on its surface produces a sparkle. The peaceful pond! The works of men shine as in the spring. The motion of an oar or an insect produces a flash of light; and if an oar falls, how sweet the echo![1]

The groundsel and hieracium down is in the air. The golden plover, they say, has been more than usually plenty here this year. Droves of cattle have for some time been coming down from up-country.

How distinctly each thing in nature is marked! as the day by a little yellow sunlight, so that the sluggard cannot mistake it.

Sept. 21. P. M. — To Conantum.

The small skull-cap and cress and the mullein still in bloom. I see pigeon woodpeckers oftener now, with their light rears. Birches and elms begin to turn yellow, and ferns are quite yellow or brown in many places. I see many tall clustered bluish asters by the brooks, like the *A. undulatus*. The blue-stemmed goldenrod is abundant, bright and in its prime. The maples begin to be ripe. How beautiful when a whole maple on the edge of a swamp is like one great scarlet

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 208, 209; Riv. 294, 295.]

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fruit, full of ripe juices! A sign of the ripening. Every leaf, from lowest limb to topmost spire, is aglow.[1] The woodbine is red, too, and its berries are bluing. The flattened black berries of the cucumber-root, with the triangular bases of its leaves tinged red beneath, as a sort of cup for them. My red ball fungus *blossoms* in the path in the midst of its jelly.

As I was walking through the maple swamp by the Corner Spring, I was surprised to see apples on the ground, and at first supposed that somebody had dropped them, but, looking up, I detected a wild apple tree, as tall and slender as the young maples and not more than five inches in diameter at the ground. This had blossomed and borne fruit this year. The apples were quite mellow and of a very agreeable flavor, though they had a rusty-scraperish look, and I filled my pockets with them. The squirrels had found them out before me. It is an agreeable surprise to find in the midst of a swamp so large and edible a fruit as an apple.

Of late we have much cloudy weather without rain. Are not liable to showers, as in summer, but may have a storm. The *Lentago* berries appear to drop off before, or as soon as, they turn. There are few left on the bushes. Many that I bring home will turn in a single night. The sassafras leaves are red. The huckleberry bushes begin to redden. The white actæa berries still hang on, or their red pedicels remain.

My friend is he who can make a good guess at me, hit me on the wing.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 259; Riv. 318.]

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Sept. 22. Sophia has in her herbarium and has found in Concord these which I have not seen this summer: —

Pogonia verticillata, Hubbard's Second Wood. Bigelow says July.

Trillium erythrocarpum, Bigelow says May and June.

Uvularia perfoliata, Bigelow says May.

P. M. — On river.

The *Polygonum amphibium* var. *terrestre* is a late flower, and now more common and the spikes larger, quite handsome and conspicuous, and more like a prince's-feather than any. Large woolly aphides are now clustered close together on the alder stems. Some of those I see are probably the sharp-shinned hawk. When was it I heard the upland plover? Has been a great flight of blue-winged teal this season. The soapwort gentian the flower of the river-banks now.

In love we impart, each to each, in subtlest immaterial form of thought or atmosphere, the best of ourselves, such as commonly vanishes or evaporates in aspirations, and mutually enrich each other. The lover alone perceives and dwells in a certain human fragrance. To him humanity is not only a flower, but an aroma and a flavor also.

Sept. 23. P. M. — Round by Clematis Brook.

The forget-me-not still. I observe the rounded tops of the dogwood bushes, scarlet in the distance, on the edge of the meadow (Hubbard's), more full and bright than any flower. The maples are mostly darker, the

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very few boughs that are turned, and the tupelo, which is reddening. The ash is just beginning to turn. The scarlet dogwood is the striking bush to-day. I find huckleberries on Conantum still sound and blackening the bushes.

How much longer a mile appears between two blue mountain peaks thirty or more miles off in the horizon than one would expect!

Some acorns and hickory nuts on the ground, but they have not begun to shell. Is it the nut of the *Carya amara*, with raised seams, but not bitter, that I perceive? I suppose that is the *Carya tomentosa*, or mockernut hickory, with large rounded nuts on Lee's land. The bitternuts (?), rubbed together, smell like varnish.

The sarothra in bloom. The wind from the north has turned the white lily pads wrong side up, so that they look red, and their stems are slanted up-stream. Almost all the yellow ones have disappeared. A blue-stemmed goldenrod, its stem and leaves red. The woodbine high on trees in the shade a delicate pink. I gathered some haws very good to eat to-day. I think they must be the senelles of the Canadians. *Hamamelis Virginiana* out, before its leaves fall. A woodchuck out. The waxwork not opened. The "feathery tails" of the clematis fruit conspicuous and interesting now. Yellow lily out (again?) in the pond-holes.

Passing a corn-field the other day, close by a hat and coat on a stake, I recognized the owner of the farm. Any of his acquaintances would. He was only a trifle more weather[-beaten] than when I saw him last. His back being toward me, I missed nothing, and I thought

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to myself if I were a crow I should not fear the balance of him, at any rate.[1]

In northern latitudes, where other edible fruits are scarce, they make an account of haws and bunchberries.

The barberry bushes in Clematis Hollow are very beautiful now, with their wreaths of red or scarlet fruit drooping over a rock.

Sept. 24. According to Emerson, *Lonicera hirsuta*, hairy honeysuckle, grows in Sudbury. Some hickories are yellow. Hazel bushes a brownish red. Most grapes are shrivelled. Pasture thistle still. The zizania ripe, shining black, cylindrical kernels, five eighths of an inch long. The fruit of the thorn trees on Lee's Hill is large, globular, and gray-dotted, but I cannot identify it certainly.

Sept. 25. *Polygonum dumetorum*, climbing false-buckwheat, still; also dodder. The fall dandelions are a prevailing flower on low turfy grounds, especially near the river. *Ranunculus reptans* still. The small galium (*trifidum*). A rose again, apparently *lucida* (?). This is always unexpected. The scarlet of the dogwood is the most conspicuous and interesting of the autumnal colors at present. You can now easily detect them at a distance; every one in the swamps you overlook is revealed. The smooth sumach and the mountain is a darker, deeper, bloodier red.

Found the *Bidens Beckii* (?) September 1st, and the fringed gentian November 7th, last year.

[1] [*Walden*, p. 24; Riv. 37.]

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Sept. 26. Dreamed of purity last night. The thoughts seemed not to originate with me, but I was invested, my thought was tinged, by another's thought. It was not I that originated, but I that *entertained* the thought.

The river is getting to be too cold for bathing. There are comparatively few weeds left in it.

It is not in vain, perhaps, that every winter the forest is brought to our doors, shaggy with lichens. Even in so humble a shape as a wood-pile, it contains sermons for us.

P. M. — To Ministerial Swamp.

The small cottony leaves of the fragrant everlasting in the fields for some time, protected, as it were, by a little web of cotton against frost and snow, — a little dense web of cotton spun over it, — entangled in it, — as if to restrain it from rising higher.

The increasing scarlet and yellow tints around the meadows and river remind me of the opening of a vast flower-bud; they are the petals of its corolla, which is of the width of the valleys. It is the flower of autumn, whose expanding bud just begins to blush. As yet, however, in the forest there are very few changes of foliage.

The *Polygonum articulatum*, giving a rosy tinge to Jenny's Desert and elsewhere, is very interesting now, with its slender dense racemes of rose-tinted flowers, apparently without leaves, rising cleanly out of the sand. It looks warm and brave; a foot or more high, and mingled with deciduous blue-curls. It is much divided, into many spreading slender-racemed branches, with

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inconspicuous linear leaves, reminding me, both by its form and its color, of a peach orchard in blossom, especially when the sunlight falls on it. Minute rose-tinted flowers that brave the frosts and advance the summer into fall, warming with their color sandy hillsides and deserts, like the glow of evening reflected on the sand. Apparently all flower and no leaf. A warm blush on the sands, after frosty nights have come. Perhaps it may be called the "evening red." Rising, apparently, with clean bare stems from the sand, it spreads out into this graceful head of slender rosy racemes, wisp-like. This little desert of less than [an] acre blushes with it.

I see now ripe, large (three-inch), very dark chocolate(?)-colored puffballs. Are then my five-fingers puffballs? The tree fern is in fruit now, with its delicate, tendril-like fruit climbing three or four feet over the asters, goldenrods, etc., on the edge of the swamp. The large ferns are yellow or brown now. Larks, like robins, fly in flocks. Dogsbane leaves a clear yellow. Succory in bloom at the Tommy Wheeler house. It bears the frost well, though we have not had much. Set out for use. The *Gnaphalium plantaginifolium* leaves, green above, downy beneath.

Sept. 27. Monday. P. M. — To C. Smith's Hill.

The flashing clearness of the atmosphere. More light appears to be reflected from the earth, less absorbed. Green lice are still on the birches.

At Saw Mill Brook many finely cut and flat ferns are faded whitish and very handsome, as if pressed, — very

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delicate. White oak acorns edible. Everywhere the squirrels are trying the nuts in good season. The touch-me-not seed-vessels go off like pistols, — shoot their seeds off like bullets. They explode in my hat.

The arum berries are now in perfection, cone-shaped spikes an inch and a half long, of scarlet or vermilion-colored, irregular, somewhat pear-shaped berries springing from a purplish core. They are exactly the color of bright sealing-wax, or, I believe, the painted tortoise's shell; on club-shaped peduncles. The changed leaves of this are delicately white, especially beneath. Here and there lies prostrate on the damp leaves or ground this conspicuous red spike. The medeola berries are common now, and the large red berries of the panicled Solomon's-seal.

It must have been a turtle dove that eyed me so near, turned its head sideways to me for a fair view, looking with a St. Vitus twitching of its neck, as if to recover its balance on an unstable perch, — that is their way.

From Smith's Hill I looked toward the mountain line. Who can believe that the mountain peak which he beholds fifty miles off in the horizon, rising far and faintly blue above an intermediate range, while he stands on his trivial native hills or in the dusty highway, can be the same with that which he looked up at once near at hand from a gorge in the midst of primitive woods? For a part of two days I travelled across lots once, loitering by the way, through primitive wood and swamps over the highest peak of the Peterboro Hills to Monadnock, by ways from which all landlords

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and stage-drivers endeavored to dissuade us. It was not a month ago. But now that I look across the globe in an instant to the dim Monadnock peak, and these familiar fields and copsewoods appear to occupy the greater part of the interval, I cannot realize that Joe Eavely's house still stands there at the base of the mountain, and all that long tramp through wild woods with invigorating scents before I got to it. I cannot realize that on the tops of those cool blue ridges are in abundance berries still, bluer than themselves, as if they borrowed their blueness from their locality. From the mountains we do not discern our native hills; but from our native hills we look out easily to the far blue mountains, which seem to preside over them. As I look northwestward to that summit from a Concord cornfield, how little can I realize all the life that is passing between me and it, — the retired up-country farmhouses, the lonely mills, wooded vales, wild rocky pastures, and new clearings on stark mountain-sides, and rivers murmuring through primitive woods! All these, and how much more, I *overlook*. I see the very peak, — there can be no mistake, — but how much I do not see, that is between me and it! How much I overlook! In this way we see stars. What is it but a faint blue cloud, a mist that may vanish? But what is it, on the other hand, to one who has travelled to it day after day, has threaded the forest and climbed the hills that are between this and that, has tasted the raspberries or the blueberries that grow on it, and the springs that gush from it, has been wearied with climbing its rocky sides, felt the coolness of its summit, and been lost in the clouds there?

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When I could sit in a cold chamber muffled in a cloak each evening till Thanksgiving time, warmed by my own thoughts, the world was not so much with me.

Sept. 28. P. M. — To the Boulder Field.

I find the hood-leaved violet quite abundant in a meadow, and the *pedata* in the Boulder Field. I have now seen all but the *blanda*, *palmata*, and *pubescens* blooming again, and bluebirds and robins, etc., are heard again in the air. This is the commencement, then, of the second spring. Violets, *Potentilla Canadensis*, lambkill, wild rose, yellow lily, etc., etc., begin again.

Children are now gathering barberries, — just the right time. Speaking of the great fall flower which the valleys are at present, its brightest petal is still the scarlet one of dogwood, and in some places the redder red maple one is equally bright; then there is the yellow walnut one, and the broad dull red one of the huckleberry, and the hazel, high blueberry, and *Viburnum nudum* of various similar tints.

It has been too cold for the thinnest coat since the middle of September.

Grapes are still abundant. I have only to shake the birches to bring down a shower of plums. But the flavor of none is quite equal to their fragrance. Some soils, like this rocky one on the old Carlisle road, are so suited to the apple that they spring up wild and bear well in the midst of pines, birches, maples, and oaks, their red and yellow fruit harmonizing with the autumnal tints of the forest in which they grow. I am surprised to see

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rising amid the maples and birches in a swamp the rounded tops of apple trees rosy with fair fruit.

A windy day. What have these high and roaring winds to do with the fall? No doubt they speak plainly enough to the sap that is in these trees, and perchance they check its upward flow.

A very handsome *gray dotted* thorn near the black birch grove, six inches in diameter, with a top large in proportion, as large as a small apple tree, bristling with many thorns from suckers about its trunk. This is a very handsome object, and the largest thorn I have seen in Concord, almost bare of leaves and one mass of red fruit, five eighths of an inch in diameter, causing its slender branches to spread and droop gracefully. It reminds me of a wisp of straws tied together, or a dust-brush upright on its handle. It must be the same I have seen in Canada. The same with that on Nawshawtuct. Probably most beautiful in fruit, not only on account of its color, but because this causes the branches to spread and curve outward gracefully.

Ah, if I could put into words that music that I hear; that music which can bring tears to the eyes of marble statues! — to which the very muscles of men are obedient!

Sept. 30. *Thursday.* 10 A. M. — To Fair Haven Pond, bee-hunting, — Pratt, Rice, Hastings, and myself, in a wagon.

A fine, clear day after the coolest night and severest frost we have had. The apparatus was, first a simple round tin box about four and a half inches in diameter

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and one and a half inches deep, containing a piece of empty honeycomb of its own size and form, filling it within a third of an inch of the top; also another, *wooden* box about two and a half inches square every way, with a glass window occupying two thirds the upper side under a slide, with a couple of narrow slits in the wood, each side of the glass, to admit air, but too narrow for the bees to pass; the whole resting on a circular bottom a little larger than the lid of the tin box, with a sliding door in it. We were earnest to go this week, before the flowers were gone, and we feared the frosty night might make the bees slow to come forth.

After we got to the Baker Farm, to one of the open fields nearest to the tree I had marked, the first thing was to find some flowers and catch some honey-bees. We followed up the bank of the brook for some distance, but the goldenrods were all dried up there, and the asters on which we expected to find them were very scarce. By the pond-side we had no better luck, the frosts perhaps having made flowers still more scarce there. We then took the path to Clematis Brook on the north of Mt. Misery, where we found a few of the *Diplopappus linariifolius* (savory-leaved aster) and one or two small white (bushy?) asters, also *A. undulatus* and *Solidago nemoralis* rarely, on which they work in a sunny place; but there were only two or three bumblebees, wasps, and butterflies, yellow and small red, on them. We had no better luck at Clematis Brook. Not a honey-bee could we find, and we concluded that we were too late, — that the weather was too cold, and

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so repaired at once to the tree I had found, a hemlock two feet and a half in diameter on a side-hill a rod from the pond. I had cut my initials in the bark in the winter, for custom gives the first finder of the nest a right to the honey and to cut down the tree to get it and pay the damages, and if he cuts his initials on it no other hunter will interfere. Not seeing any signs of bees from the ground, one of the party climbed the tree to where the leading stem had formerly been broken off, leaving a crotch at about eighteen feet from the ground, and there he found a small hole into which he thrust a stick two or three feet down the tree, and dropped it to the bottom; and, putting in his hand, he took out some old comb. The bees had probably died.

After eating our lunch, we set out on our return. By the roadside at Walden, on the sunny hillside sloping to the pond, we saw a large mass of goldenrod and aster several rods square and comparatively fresh. Getting out of our wagon, we found it to be resounding with the hum of bees. (It was about 1 o'clock.) There were far more flowers than we had seen elsewhere. Here were bees in great numbers, both bumblebees and honey-bees, as well as butterflies and wasps and flies. So, pouring a mixture of honey and water into the empty comb in the tin box, and holding the lid of the tin box in one hand and the wooden box with the slides shut in the other, we proceeded to catch the honey-bees by shutting them in suddenly between the lid of the tin box and the large circular bottom of the wooden one, cutting off the flower-stem with the edge of the lid at

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the same time. Then, holding the lid still against the wooden box, we drew the slide in the bottom and also the slide covering the window at the top, that the light might attract the bee to pass up into the wooden box. As soon as he had done so and was buzzing against the glass, the lower slide was closed and the lid with the flower removed, and more bees were caught in the same way. Then, placing the other, tin, box containing the comb filled with honeyed water close under the wooden one, the slide was drawn again, and the upper slide closed, making it dark; and in about a minute they went to feeding, as was ascertained by raising slightly the wooden box. Then the latter was wholly removed, and they were left feeding or sucking up the honey in broad daylight. In from two to three minutes one had loaded himself and commenced leaving the box. He would buzz round it back and forth a foot or more, and then, sometimes, finding that he was too heavily loaded, alight to empty himself or clean his feet. Then, starting once more, he would begin to circle round irregularly, at first in a small circle only a foot or two in diameter, as

if to examine the premises that he might know them again, till, at length, rising higher and higher and circling wider and wider and swifter and swifter, till his orbit was ten or twelve feet in diameter and as much from the ground, — though its centre might be moved to one side, — so that it was very difficult to follow him, especially if you looked against a wood or the hill,

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and you had to lie low to fetch him against the sky (you must operate in an open space, not in a wood); all this as if to ascertain the course to his nest; then, in a minute or less from his first starting, he darts off in a bee-line, that is, as far as I could see him, which might be eight or ten rods, looking against the sky (and you had to follow his whole career very attentively indeed to see when and where he went off at a tangent), in a waving or sinuous (right and left) line, toward his nest.

We sent forth as many as a dozen bees, which flew in about three directions, but all toward the village, or where we knew there were hives. They did not fly so almost absolutely straight as I had heard, but within three or four feet of the same course for half a dozen rods, or as far as we could see. Those belonging to one hive all had to digress to get round an apple tree. As none flew in the right direction for us, we did not attempt to line them. In less than half an hour the first returned to the box still lying on the wood-pile, — for not one of the bees on the surrounding flowers discovered it, — and so they came back, one after another, loaded themselves and departed; but now they went off with very little preliminary circling, as if assured of their course. We were furnished with little boxes of red, blue, green, yellow, and white paint, in dry powder, and with a stick we sprinkled a little of the red powder on the back of one while he was feeding, — gave him a little dab, — and it settled down amid the fuzz of his back and gave him a distinct red jacket. He went off like most of them toward some hives about three

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quarters of a mile distant, and we observed by the watch the time of his departure. In just twenty-two minutes red jacket came back, with enough of the powder still on his back to mark him plainly. He may have gone more than three quarters of a mile. At any rate, he had a head wind to contend with while laden. They fly swiftly and surely to their nests, never resting by the way, and I was surprised — though I had been informed of it — at the distance to which the village bees go for flowers.

The rambler in the most remote woods and pastures little thinks that the bees which are humming so industriously on the rare wild flowers he is plucking for his herbarium, in some out-of-the-way nook, are, like himself, ramblers from the village, perhaps from his own yard, come to get their honey for his hives. All the honey-bees we saw were on the blue-stemmed golden-rod (*Solidago cæsia*), which is late, lasts long, which emitted a sweet agreeable fragrance, not on the asters. I feel the richer for this experience. It taught me that even the insects in my path are not loafers, but have their special errands. Not merely and vaguely in this world, but in this hour, each is about its business. If, then, there are any sweet flowers still lingering on the hillside, it is known to the bees both of the forest and the village. The botanist should make interest with the bees if he would know when the flowers open and when they close. Those I have named were the only common and prevailing flowers at this time to look for them on.

Our red jacket had performed the voyage in safety;

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no bird had picked him up. Are the kingbirds gone? Now is the time to hunt bees and take them up, when the combs are full of honey and before the flowers are so scarce that they begin to consume the honey they have stored.

The common milkweed down has begun to fly; the desmodium, tick-trefoil, adheres now to my clothes. Saw by Clematis Brook extensive rootings of moles.

Forty pounds of honey was the most our company had got hereabouts.

We also caught and sent forth a bumblebee, who manœuvred like the others, though we thought he took time to eat some before he loaded himself, and then he was so overloaded and bedaubed that he had to alight after he had started, and it took him several minutes to clean himself.

It is not in vain that the flowers bloom, and bloom late too, in favored spots. To us they are a culture and a luxury, but to bees meat and drink. The tiny bee which we thought lived far away there in a flower-bell in that remote vale, he is a great voyager, and anon he rises up over the top of the wood and sets sail with his sweet cargo straight for his distant haven. How well they know the woods and fields and the haunt of every flower! The flowers, perchance, are widely dispersed, because the sweet which they collect from the atmosphere is rare but also widely dispersed, and the bees are enabled to travel far to find it. A precious burthen, like their color and fragrance, a crop which the heavens bear and deposit on the earth.

Rees's Cyclopædia says that "Philliscus retired into

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a desert wood, that he might have the opportunity of observing them [bees][1] to better advantage." Paul Dudley wrote the Royal Society about 1723 that the Indians had no word for bee; called it "Englishman's fly."

[1] [The word is supplied by Thoreau.]

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VI

OCTOBER, 1852

(ÆT. 35)

Oct. 1. *Friday.* Surveying in Lincoln. A severer frost last night. The young and tender trees begin to assume the autumnal tints more generally, plainly in consequence of the frost the last two mornings. The sides of the bushy hills present a rich variety of colors like rug work, but the forest generally is not yet changed.

Oct. 2. P. M. — To Cliffs.

The beggar-ticks (*Bidens*) now adhere to my clothes. I also find the desmodium sooner thus — as a magnet discovers the steel filings in a heap of ashes — than if I used my eyes alone. The river is as low, within an inch or two, as when I made my mark. A very warm day after the frosts, so that I wish — though I am afraid to wear — a thin coat. From Cliffs the shrub oak plain has now a bright-red ground, perhaps of maples. How much more beautiful the lakes now, like Fair Haven, surrounded by the autumn-tinted woods and hills, as in an ornamented frame! Some maples in sprout-lands are of a delicate, pure, clear, unspotted red, inclining to crimson, surpassing most flowers. I would fain pluck the whole tree and carry it home for a nosegay. The veiny-leaved hawkweed in blossom (again ?).

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Oct. 3. P. M. — To Flint's Pond.

I hear a hylodes (?) from time to time. Shrub oaks are red, some of them. Hear the loud laughing of a loon on Flint's, apparently alone in the middle. A wild sound, heard far and suited to the wildest lake. Many acorns strew the ground, and have fallen into the water.

Collected a parcel of grass (?) balls, some washed up high and dry, — part of the shore-line consists of the same material, — from a half-inch to four inches diameter. The sand indicates that they are formed on the sandy shore. The partly decomposed rushes composed of similar fibres.[1]

From Heywood's Peak at Walden, the shore is now more beautifully painted. The most prominent are the red maples and the yellowish aspens. The *Aster undulatus* is common and fresh, also the *Solidago nemoralis* of Gray.

The pine fall, *i. e.* change, is commenced, and the trees are mottled green and yellowish.

Oct. 5. Was told at Bunker Hill Monument to-day that Mr. Savage saw the White Mountains several times while working on the monument. It required very clear weather in the northwest and a storm clearing up here.

Oct. 7. P. M. — To Great Meadows.

I find no fringed gentian. Perhaps the autumnal tints are as bright and interesting now as they will be. Now is the time to behold the maple swamps, one mass of red and yellow, all on fire, as it were; these and the

[1] A *Scirpus?*

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blood-red huckleberries are the most conspicuous; and then, in the village, the warm brownish-yellow elms, and there and elsewhere the dark-red ashes. The green pines springing out of huckleberries on the hillsides look as if surrounded by red or vermilion paint. I notice the *Viola ovata*, houstonia, *Ranunculus repens*, caducous polygala, small scratch-grass polygonum, autumnal dandelion (very abundant, yellowing the low turfy grounds and hills), small bushy white aster, a few goldenrods, *Polygonum hydropiperoides* and the unknown flowerless bidens, soapwort gentian (now turned dark purple), yarrow, the white erigeron, red clover, hedge-mustard. The muskrats have begun to erect their cabins. They begin soon after the pontederias are dead (??). Saw one done. Do they build them in the night? Hear and see larks, bluebirds, robins, song sparrows. Also see painted tortoises and shad frogs. There must be an abundance of mast this year. I could gather up nearly a bushel of acorns under one white oak, out of their cups, and, I think, quite good to eat. They are earlier to fall than the walnuts. It is encouraging to see a large crop of acorns, though we do not use them. The white maples turn yellowish, though some boughs are red.

I sit on Poplar Hill. It is a warm Indian-summerish afternoon. The sun comes out of clouds, and lights up and warms the whole scene. It is perfect autumn. I see a hundred smokes arising through the yellow elm-tops in the village, where the villagers are preparing for tea. It is the mellowing year. The sunshine harmonizes with the imbrowned and fiery foliage.

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Did Russell call my red globular fungus geiropodium [?], etc.?

Oct. 8. P. M. — Walden.

Canada snapdragon, a few flowers at top. Everlastings, field trefoil, shepherd's-purse, door-grass, white goldenrod, fresh tansy, veiny-leaved hawkweed, also that which seems to run from this into *Gronovii* (probably the former). *Aster undulatus* (?), with delicate purplish or lilac-tinted flowers, has those heart-shaped, crenate leaves with a claret under surface. Bushy gerardia budded still.

The autumnal tints about the pond are now perfect. Nothing can exceed the brilliancy of some of the maples which stand by the shore and extend their red banners over the water. Why should so many be yellow? I see the browner yellow of the chestnuts on Pine Hill. The maples and hickories are a clearer yellow. Some white oaks are red. The shrub oaks are bloody enough for a ground. The red and black oaks are yet green.

As I was paddling along the north shore, after having looked in vain over the pond for a loon, suddenly a loon, sailing toward the middle, a few rods in front, set up his wild laugh and betrayed himself. I pursued with a paddle and he dived, but when he came up I was nearer than before. He dived again, but I miscalculated the direction he would take, and we were fifty rods apart when he came up, and again he laughed long and loud. He managed very cunningly, and I could not get within half a dozen rods of him. Some-

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times he would come up unexpectedly on the opposite side of me, as if he had passed directly under the boat. So long-winded was he, so unweariable, that he would immediately plunge again, and then no wit could divine where in the deep pond, beneath the smooth surface, he might be speeding his way like a fish, perchance passing under the boat. He had time and ability to visit the bottom of the pond in its deepest part. A newspaper authority says a fisherman — giving his name — has caught loon in Seneca Lake, N. Y., eighty feet beneath the surface, with hooks set for trout. Miss Cooper has said the same. Yet he appeared to know his course as surely under water as on the surface, and swam much faster there than he sailed on the surface. It was surprising how serenely he sailed off with unruffled bosom when he came to the surface. It was as well for me to rest on my oars and await his reappearing as to endeavor to calculate where he would come up. When I was straining my eyes over the surface, I would suddenly be startled by his unearthly laugh behind me. But why, after displaying so much cunning, did he betray himself the moment he came to the surface with that loud laugh? His white breast enough betrayed him. He was indeed a silly loon, I thought. Though he took all this pains to avoid me, he never failed to give notice of his whereabouts the moment he came to the surface. After an hour he seemed as fresh as ever, dived as willingly, and swam yet farther than at first. Once or twice I saw a ripple where he approached the surface, just put his head out to reconnoitre, and instantly dived again. I could commonly

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hear the plash of the water when he came up, and so also detected him. It was commonly a demoniac laughter, yet somewhat like a water-bird, but occasionally, when he had balked me most successfully and come up a long way off, he uttered a long-drawn unearthly howl, probably more like a wolf than any other bird. This was his looning. As when a beast puts his muzzle to the ground and deliberately howls; perhaps the wildest sound I ever heard, making the woods ring; and I concluded that he laughed in derision of my efforts, confident of his own resources. Though the sky was overcast, the pond was so smooth that I could see where he broke the surface if I did not hear him. His white breast, the stillness of the air, the smoothness of the water, were all against [him]. At length, having come up fifty rods off, he uttered one of those prolonged unearthly howls, as if calling on the god of loons to aid him, and immediately there came a wind from the east and rippled the surface, and filled the whole air with misty rain. I was impressed as if it were the prayer of the loon and his god was angry with me. How surprised must be the fishes to see this ungainly visitant from another sphere speeding his way amid their schools![1]

I have never seen more than one at a time in our pond, and I believe that that is always a male.[2]

Oct. 9. Touch-me-not, self-heal, *Bidens cernua*, ladies'-tresses, cerastium, dwarf tree-primrose, butter-

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 259–262; Riv. 364–368.]

[2] *Vide* Oct. 11 [p. 382].

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and-eggs (abundant), prenanthes, sium, silvery cinquefoil, mayweed. My rainbow rush must be the *Juncus militaris*, not yet colored.

Oct. 10. Burdock, *Ranunculus acris*, rough hawkweed. A drizzling rain to-day. The air is full of falling leaves. The streets are strewn with elm leaves. The trees begin to look thin. The butternut is perhaps the first on the street to lose its leaves. Rain, more than wind, makes the leaves fall. Glow-worms in the evening.

Oct. 11. *Monday.* Most leaves are already somewhat faded and withered. Their tints are not so bright. The chestnut leaves already rustle with a great noise as you walk through the woods, as they lie light, firm, and crisp. Now the chestnuts are rattling out. The burs are gaping and showing the plump nuts. They fill the ruts in the road, and are abundant amid the fallen leaves in the midst of the wood. The jays scream, and the red squirrels scold, while you are clubbing and shaking the trees. Now it is true autumn; all things are crisp and ripe.

I observed the other day (October 8) that those insects whose ripple I could see from the Peak were water-bugs. I could detect the progress of a water-bug over the smooth surface in almost any part of the pond, for they furrow the water slightly, making a conspicuous ripple bounded by two diverging lines, but the skaters slide over it without producing a perceptible ripple. In this clear air and with this glassy surface the motion of every water-bug, ceaselessly progressing

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over the pond, was perceptible.[1] Here and there amid the skaters.

Oct. 12. I am struck by the superfluity of light in the atmosphere in the autumn, as if the earth absorbed none, and out of this profusion of dazzling light came the autumnal tints. Can it be because there is less vapor? The delicacy of the stratification in the white sand by the railroad, where they have been getting out sand for the brick-yards, the delicate stratification of this great globe like the leaves of the choicest volume just shut on a lady's table. The piled-up history! I am struck by the slow and delicate process by which the globe was formed.

Paddled on Walden. A rippled surface. Scared up ducks. Saw them first far over the surface, just risen,— two smaller, white-bellied, one larger, black. They circled round as usual, and the first went off, but the black one went round and round and over the pond five or six times at a considerable height and distance, when I thought several times he had gone to the river, and at length settled down by a slanting flight of a quarter of a mile into a distant part of the pond which I had left free; but what beside safety these ducks get by sailing in the middle of Walden I don't know.[2] That black rolling-pin with wings, circling round you half a mile off for a quarter of an hour, at that height, from which he sees the river and Fair Haven all the while, from which he sees so many things, while I see

[1] [*Walden*, p. 208; Riv. 294.]
[2] [*Walden*, p. 262; Riv. 368.]

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almost him alone. Their wings set so far back. They are not handsome, but wild.

What an ample share of the light of heaven each pond and lake on the surface of the globe enjoys! No woods are so dark and deep but it is light above the pond. Its window or skylight is as broad as its surface. It lies out patent to the sky. From the mountain-top you may not be able to see out because of the woods, but on the lake you are bathed in light.

I can discern no skaters nor water-bugs on the surface of the pond, which is now rippled. Do they, then, glide forth to the middle in calm days only, by short impulses, till they have completely covered it?[1]

A new carpet of pine leaves is forming in the woods. The forest is laying down her carpet for the winter. The elms in the village, losing their leaves, reveal the birds' nests.

I dug some ground-nuts in the railroad bank with my hands this afternoon, the vine being now dead. They were nearly as large as hen's eggs, six inches or a foot beneath the surface, on the end of a root or strung along on it. I had them roasted and boiled at supper time. The skin came readily off like a potato. Roasted, they have an agreeable taste very much like a potato, though somewhat fibrous in texture. With my eyes shut, I should not know but I was eating a rather soggy potato. Boiled, they were unexpectedly quite dry, and though in this instance a little strong, had a more nutty flavor. With a little salt, a hungry man would make a very palatable meal on them. It

[1] [*Walden*, p. 208; Riv. 294.]

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would not be easy to find them, especially now that the vines are dead, unless you knew beforehand where they grew.[1]

Oct. 13. P. M. — To Cliffs.

Many maples have lost all their leaves and are shrunk all at once to handsome clean gray wisps on the edge of the meadows, where, crowded together, at a distance they look like smoke. This is a sudden and important change, produced mainly, I suppose, by the rain of Sunday, 10th. The autumnal tints have commonly already lost their brightness. It lasts but a day or two. Corn-spurry and spotted polygonum and polygala.

Fair Haven Pond, methinks, never looks so handsome as at this season. It is a sufficiently clear and warm, rather Indian-summer day, and they are gathering the apples in the orchard. The warmth is more required, and we welcome and appreciate it all. The shrub oak plain is now a deep red, with grayish, withered, apparently white oak leaves intermixed. The chickadees take heart, too, and sing above these warm rocks. Birches, hickories, aspens, etc., in the distance, are like innumerable small flames on the hillsides about the pond. The pond is now most beautifully framed with the autumn-tinted woods and hills. The water or lake, from however distant a point seen, is always the centre of the landscape. Fair Haven lies more open and can be seen from more distant points than any of our ponds. The air is singularly fine-grained; the sward looks short and firm. The mountains are more

[1] [*Walden*, p. 264; Riv. 371.]

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distinct from the rest of the earth and slightly impurpled. Seeming to lie up more. How peaceful great nature! There is no disturbing sound, but far amid the western hills there rises a pure white smoke in constant volumes.

That handsome kind of sedge (?) which lasts through the winter must be the *Scirpus Eriophorum*, red cotton-grass of Bigelow, and wool-grass (under bulrush and club-rush) of Gray.

Oct. 14. That coarse yellowish fungus is very common in the paths in woods of late, for a month, often picked by birds, often decayed, often mashed by the foot like a piece of pumpkin, defiling and yellowing the grass, as if a liquor (or dust) distilled from them. The pines are now two-colored, green and yellow, — the latter just below the ends of the boughs. The woods have lost so many leaves they begin to look bare, — maples, poplars, etc., chestnuts. Flowers are fast disappearing. Winter may be anticipated. But few crickets are heard. Jays and chickadees are oftener heard in the fall than in summer. It is apparently the *Eriophorum Virginicum*, Virginian cotton-grass, now nodding or waving with its white woolly heads over the greenish andromeda and amid the red isolated blueberry bushes in Beck Stow's Swamp. A thousand white woolly heads, one to two inches in diameter, suggesting winter. The lower or older leaves of the andromeda begin to redden. This plant forms extensive solid beds with a definite surface, level or undulating, like a moss bed. Not, like the huckleberry, irregular and independent each of the

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other, but regular and in community, as if covered by a film.

Oct. 15. 9 A. M. — The first snow is falling (after not very cool weather), in large flakes, filling the air and obscuring the distant woods and houses, as if the inhabitants above were emptying their pillow-cases. Like a mist it divides the uneven landscape at a little distance into ridges and vales. The ground begins to whiten, and our thoughts begin to prepare for winter. Whiteweed. The Canada snapdragon is one of the latest flowers noticed, a few buds being still left to blossom at the tops of its spike or raceme. The snow lasted but half an hour. Ice a week or two ago.

P. M. — Walden.

The water of Walden is a light green next the shore, apparently because of the light rays reflected from the sandy bottom mingling with the rays which the water reflects. Just this portion it is which in the spring, being warmed by the heat reflected from the bottom and transmitted through the earth, melts first and forms a narrow canal about the still frozen pond.[1] The water appears blue when the surface is much disturbed, also in a single cake of ice; that is, perhaps, when enough light is mixed with it.

The flight of a partridge, leaving her lair (?) on the hillside only a few rods distant, with a gentle whirring sound, is like the blowing of rocks at a great distance. Perhaps it produces the same kind of undulations in the air.

[1] [*Walden*, p. 196; Riv. 277.]

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The rain of the night and morning, together with the wind, had strewn the ground with chestnuts. The burs, generally empty, come down with a loud sound, while I am picking the nuts in the woods. I have come out before the rain is fairly over, before there are any fresh tracks on the Lincoln road by Britton's shanty, and I find the nuts abundant in the road itself. It is a pleasure to detect them in the woods amid the firm, crispy, crackling chestnut leaves. There is somewhat singularly refreshing in the color of this nut, the chestnut color. No wonder it gives a name to a color. One man tells me he has bought a wood-lot in Hollis to cut, and has let out the picking of the chestnuts to women at the halves. As the trees will probably be cut for them, they will make rapid work of it.

How Father Le Jeune pestered the poor Indians with his God at every turn (they must have thought it his one idea), only getting their attention when they required some external aid to save them from starving! Then, indeed, they were good Christians.

Oct. 16. *Saturday.* The sidewalks are covered with the impressions of leaves which fell yesterday and were pressed into the soil by the feet of the passers, leaving a myriad dark spots — like bird-tracks or hieroglyphics to a casual observer.

What are the sparrow-like birds with striped breasts and two triangular chestnut-colored spots on the breasts which I have seen some time, picking the seeds of the weeds in the garden?

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Oct. 18. Up river to Bittern Cliff.

A mild, still, but cloudy, or rather misty, afternoon. The water is at present perfectly smooth and calm, but covered with a kind of smoky or hazy film. Nevertheless, the reflections of distant woods, though less distinct, are softer, seen through this smoky and darkened atmosphere. I speak only of the reflections as seen in the broader bays and longer reaches of the river, as at the Willow End. The general impression made by the river landscape now is that of bareness and bleakness, the black willow (not yet the golden) and the button-bush having lost almost all their leaves (the latter perhaps all), and the last is covered with the fuzzy mikania blossoms gone to seed, a dirty white. There are a very few polygonums, *hydropiperoides* and perhaps the unknown rose-tinted one, but most have withered before the frosts. The vegetation of the immediate shore and the water is for the most part black and withered. A few muskrat-houses are going up, abrupt and precipitous on one side, sloped on the other. I distinguish the dark moist layer of weeds deposited last night on what had dried in the sun. The tall bulrush and the wool-grass are dry and yellow, except a few in deep water, but the rainbow rush (*Juncus militaris*) is still green. The autumnal tints, though less brilliant and striking, are perhaps quite as agreeable, now that the frosts have somewhat dulled and softened [them]. Now that the forest is universally imbrowned, they make a more harmonious impression. Wooded hillsides reflected in the water are particularly agreeable. The undulation which the boat creates gives

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them the appearance of being terraced. Chickadees and jays are heard from the shore as in winter. Saw two or three ducks, which fly up before and alight far behind.

Oct. 19. I see the dandelion blossoms in the path. The buds of the skunk-cabbage already show themselves in the meadow, the pointed involucres (?).

At 5 P. M. I found the fringed gentian now somewhat stale and touched by frost, being in the meadow toward Peter's. (*Gentiana crinita* in September, Bigelow and Gray.) Probably on high, moist ground it is fresher. It may have been in bloom a month. It has been cut off by the mower, and apparently has put out in consequence a mass of short branches full of flowers. This may make it later. I doubt if I can find one naturally grown. At this hour the blossoms are tightly rolled and twisted, and I see that the bees have gnawed round holes in their sides to come at the nectar. They have found them, though I had not. "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen" by man. An hour ago I doubted if fringed gentians were in Concord now, but, having found these, they as it were surrender, and I hear of them at the bottom of N. Barrett's orchard toward the river, and by Tuttle's (?). They are now, at 8 A. M., opening a little in a pitcher. It is too remarkable a flower not to be sought out and admired each year, however rare. It is one of the errands of the walker, as well as of the bees, for it yields him a more celestial nectar still. It is a very singular and agreeable surprise to come upon this conspicuous

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and handsome and withal blue flower at this season, when flowers have passed out of our minds and memories; the latest of all to begin to bloom, unless it be the witch-hazel, when, excepting the latter, flowers are reduced to that small Spartan cohort, hardy, but for the most part unobserved, which linger till the snow buries them, and those interesting reappearing flowers which, though fair and fresh and tender, hardly delude us with the prospect of a new spring, and which we pass by indifferent, as if they only bloomed to die. *Vide* Bryant's verses on the Fringed Gentian.

There are a few bulrushes, lances of the pigmies or the cranes, still green in the brooks. I brought home one big as my finger and almost six feet high. Most are now yellowed and dry.

It is remarkable how tightly the gentians roll and twist up at night, as if that were their constant state. Probably those bees were working late that found it necessary to perforate the flower.

Oct. 20. Canada snapdragon, tansy, white goldenrod, blue-stemmed ditto. *Aster undulatus*, autumnal dandelion, tall buttercup, yarrow, mayweed. Picking chestnuts on Pine Hill. A rather cold and windy, somewhat wintry afternoon, the heavens overcast. The clouds have lifted in the northwest, and I see the mountains in sunshine, all the more attractive from the cold I feel here, with a tinge of purple on them, a cold but memorable and glorious outline. This is an advantage of mountains in the horizon: they show you fair weather from the midst of foul. The small red Solomon's-seal

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berries spot the ground here and there amid the dry leaves. The witch-hazel is bare of all but flowers.

Many a man, when I tell him that I have been on to a mountain, asks if I took a glass with me. No doubt, I could have seen further with a glass, and particular objects more distinctly, — could have counted more meeting-houses; but this has nothing to do with the peculiar beauty and grandeur of the view which an elevated position affords. It was not to see a few particular objects, as if they were near at hand, as I had been accustomed to see them, that I ascended the mountain, but to see an infinite variety far and near in their relation to each other, thus reduced to a single picture. The facts of science, in comparison with poetry, are wont to be as vulgar as looking from the mountain with a telescope. It is a counting of meeting-houses. At the public house, the mountain-house, they keep a glass to let, and think the journey to the mountain-top is lost, that you have got but half the view, if you have not taken a glass with you.

Oct. 21. *Thursday.* P. M. — To Second Division Brook and Ministerial Swamp.

Cerastium. Apparently some flowers yield to the frosts; others linger here and there till the snow buries them. Saw that the side-flowering skull-cap was killed by the frost. If they grow in some nook out of the way of frosts, they last so much the longer. Methinks the frost puts a period to a large class. The goldenrods, being dead, are now a dingy white along the brooks (white fuzz, dark-brown leaves), together with rusty,

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fuzzy trumpet-weeds and asters in the same condition. This is a remarkable feature in the landscape now, the abundance of dead weeds. The frosts have done it. Winter comes on gradually. The red maples have lost their leaves before the rock maple, which is now losing its leaves at top first. All the country over, the frosts have come and seared the tenderer herbs along all brooksides. How unobserved this change until it has taken place! The birds that fly at the approach of winter are come from the north. Some time since I might have said some birds are leaving us, others, like ducks, are just arriving from the north, the herbs are withering along the brooks, the humming insects are going into winter quarters.

The deciduous trees are green but about four months in the year, — from June 1st to October 1st, perhaps.

Polygonum articulatum lingers still.[1] Silvery cinquefoil, hedge-mustard, and clover. I find caddis-cases with worms in Second Division Brook. And what mean those little piles of yellow sand on dark-colored stones at the bottom of the swift-running water, kept together and in place by some kind of gluten and looking as if sprinkled on the stones, one eighteenth of an inch in diameter? These caddis-worms just build a little case around themselves, and sometimes attach a few dead leaves to disguise it, and then fasten it (?) slightly to some swaying grass stem or blade at the bottom in swift water, and these are their quarters till next spring. This reminds me that winter does not put his rude fin-

[1] [An interrogation-point in the margin.]

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gers in the bottom of the brooks. When you look into the brooks you see various dead leaves floating or resting on the bottom, and you do not suspect that some are the disguises which the caddis-worms have borrowed. Fresh *Bœomyces roseus* near Tommy Wheeler's. The cotton-woolly aphides on the alders.

Gilpin speaks of "floats of timber" on the river Wey, in 1775, as picturesque objects. Thus in the oldest settled and civilized country there is a resemblance or reminiscence still of the primitive new country, and more or less timber never ceases to grow on the head waters of its streams, and perchance the wild muskrat still perforates its banks. England may endure as long as she grows oaks for her navy.[1] Timber rafts still (?) annually come down the Rhine, like the Mississippi and St. Lawrence. But the forests of England are thin, for Gilpin says of the Isle of Wight in Charles II's time, "There were woods in the island so complete and extensive, that it is said a squirrel might have travelled in several parts, many leagues together, on the tops of the trees."

Oct. 22. To Walden.

Ebby Hubbard's oaks, now turned a sober and warm red and yellow, have a very rich crisp and curled look, especially against the green pines. This is when the ripe high-colored leaves have begun to curl and wither. Then they have a warm and harmonious tint. First they are ripened by the progress of the year, and the character of each appears in distinct colors. Then

[1] *Vide* Loudon on the extent of oak forest there.

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come the severe frosts and, dulling the brilliancy of most, produce a harmony of warm brown or red and yellow tinges throughout the forest, something like marbling and painting over it, making one shade run into another. The forest is the more rug-like.

When I approached the pond over Heywood's Peak, I disturbed a hawk (a fish hawk?) on a white pine by the water watching for his prey, with long, narrow, sharp wings and a white belly. He flew slowly across the pond somewhat like a gull. He is the more picturesque object against the woods or water for being white beneath.

Now and for some time past, northwest winds prevail, wafting the air cooled by the snows that way, perhaps. This being the direction of the wind, I see again the clouds lifted in the northwest horizon. And methinks this phenomenon is very often repeated during the winter. The blue-stemmed goldenrod. *Aster undulatus* with a pinkish or lilac tinge, and humblebees on it. *Solidago altissima.* The bushy gerardia still with sticky stem and wrinkled radical leaves. Scarcely a skater insect to be seen. I see no water-bugs. It is getting too cool for them.

In consequence of the above winds and clouds, we have to-night a bright warm sunset (to me on the water) after a cool gray afternoon, lighting up the green pines at the northeast end of the pond; every yellow leaf of birch or aspen or hickory is doubly bright, and, looking over the forest on Pine Hill, I can hardly tell which trees are lit up by the sunshine and which are the yellow chestnut-tops. Thus both the spring and autumn

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tints or aspect of the woods reminds me of the sunshine. The forest has never so good a setting and foreground as seen from the middle of a lake, rising from the water's edge. The water's edge makes the best frame for the picture and natural boundary to the forest.[1]

Oct. 23. P. M. — To Conantum.

This may be called an Indian-summer day. It is quite hazy withal, and the mountains invisible. I see a horehound turned lake or steel-claret color. The yellow lily pads in Hubbard's ditch are fresh, as if recently expanded. There are some white lily pads in river still, but very few indeed of the yellow lily. A pasture thistle on Conantum just budded, but flat with the ground. The fields generally wear a russet hue. A striped snake out. The milkweed (*Syriaca*) now rapidly discounting. The lanceolate pods having opened, the seeds spring out on the least jar, or when dried by the sun, and form a little fluctuating white silky mass or tuft, each held by the extremities of the fine threads, until a stronger puff of wind sets them free. It is a pleasant sight to see it dispersing its seeds. The bass has lost its leaves. I see where boys have gathered the mockernut, though it has not fallen out of its shells. The red squirrel chirrups in the walnut grove. The chickadees flit along, following me inquisitively a few rods with lisping, tinkling note, — flit within a few feet of me from curiosity, head downward on the pines. The white pines have shed their leaves, making a yellow carpet on the grass,

[1] [*Walden*, p. 291.]

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but the pitch pines are yet parti-colored. Is it the procumbent speedwell (*Veronica agrestis*) still in flower on Lee's Cliff? But its leaves are neither heart-ovate nor shorter than the peduncles. The sprays of the witch-hazel are sprinkled on the air, and recurved. The pennyroyal stands brown and sere, though fragrant still, on the shelves of the Cliff. The elms in the street have nearly lost their leaves.

October has been the month of autumnal tints. The first of the month the tints began to be more general, at which time the frosts began, though there were scattered bright tints long before; but not till then did the forest begin to be painted. By the end of the month the leaves will either have fallen or be sered and turned brown by the frosts for the most part. Also the month of barberries and chestnuts.

My friend is one whom I meet, who takes me for what I am. A stranger takes me for something else than I am. We do not speak, we cannot communicate, till we find that we are recognized. The stranger supposes in our stead a third person whom we do not know, and we leave him to converse with that one. It is suicide for us to become abetters in misapprehending ourselves. Suspicion creates the stranger and substitutes him for the friend. I cannot abet any man in misapprehending myself.

What men call social virtues, good fellowship, is commonly but the virtue of pigs in a litter, which lie close together to keep each other warm. It brings men together in crowds and mobs in barrooms and elsewhere, but it does not deserve the name of virtue.

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Oct. 24. Another Indian-summer day.

P. M. — Rode to Stow *via* powder-mills with W. E. C., returning *via* the fir tree house, Vose's Hill, and Corner.

The road through the woods this side the powder-mills was very gorgeous with the sun shining endwise through it, and the red tints of the deciduous trees, now somewhat imbrowned, mingled with the liquid green of the pines. The andromeda is already browned, has a grayish-brown speckled look. I see, far over the river, boys gathering walnuts. At the fall on the river at Parker's paper-mill, there is a bright sparkle on the water long before we get to it.

I saw in Stow some trees fuller of apples still than I remember to have ever seen. Small yellow apples hanging over the road. The branches were gracefully drooping with the weight of the fruit like a barberry bush, so that the whole tree acquired a new character. The topmost branches, instead of standing erect, spread and drooped in all directions.[1]

The larches in the swamps are now conspicuously yellow and ready for their fall. They can now be distinguished at a distance. There is an agreeable prospect from near the post-office in the northwest of Sudbury. The southeast (?) horizon is very distant, — but what perhaps makes it more agreeable, it is a low distance, — extending to the Weston elm in the horizon. You are more impressed with the extent of earth overlooked than if the view were bounded by mountains.

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 296; Riv. 364.]

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Oct. 25. Monday. P. M. — Down river to Ball's Hill in boat.

Another perfect Indian-summer day. One of my oars makes a creaking sound like a block in a harbor, such a sound as would bring tears into an old sailor's eyes. It suggests to me adventure and seeking one's fortune. Turtles are still seen dropping into the water (*Emys picta*). The white maples have mostly shed their leaves, but those which are beneath the level of the bank, protected by it, still hold on. This leafy stratum rises exactly to a level with the bank. The water for some time has been clear of weeds mostly, but looks cool for fishes. We get into the lee of the hill near Abner Buttrick's (?), where is smooth water, and here it is very warm and sunny under the pitch pines, and some small bushy white asters still survive.

The autumnal tints grow gradually darker and duller, but not less rich to my eye. And now a hillside near the river exhibits the darkest, crispy reds and browns of every hue, all agreeably blended. At the foot, next the meadow, stands a front rank of smoke-like maples bare of leaves, intermixed with yellow birches. Higher up, red oaks of various shades of dull red, with yellowish, perhaps black oaks intermixed, and walnuts, now brown, and near the hilltop, or rising above the rest, perhaps, a still yellowish oak, and here and there amid the rest or in the foreground on the meadow, dull ashy salmon-colored white oaks large and small, all these contrasting with the clear liquid, sempiternal green of pines.

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The sheen on the water blinds my eyes. The zizania stands still, with its slender spires empty of grain, by the water's edge. The *Polygonum hydropiperoides* is now all crisp and brown with frost. Mint is still green and wonderfully recreating to smell. I had put such things behind me. It is hard to remember lilies now. The savory-leaved aster in a sheltered place, and caducous polygala. Where large chestnuts were sawed down last winter by Walden, sprouts have come up six feet high on every side of the stump, very thick, so as to form perfect bowers in which a man might be concealed. Where a fire has run over such ground, I have noticed such shoots all dead and drawn or shrunk together at top.

The constitution of the Indian mind appears to be the very opposite to that of the white man. He is acquainted with a different side of nature. He measures his life by winters, not summers. His year is not measured by the sun, but consists of a certain number of moons, and his moons are measured not by days, but by nights. He has taken hold of the dark side of nature; the white man, the bright side.

Oct. 26. P. M. — Walden and Cliffs.

There are no skaters on the pond now. It is cool today and windier. The water is rippled considerably. As I stand in the boat, the farther off the water, the bluer it is. Looking straight down, it is a dark green. Hence, apparently, the celestial blueness of those distant river-reaches, when the water is agitated, so that their surfaces reflect the sky at the right angle. It is a

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darker blue than that of the sky itself.[1] When I look down on the pond from the Peak, it is far less blue.

The blue-stemmed and white goldenrod apparently survive till winter, — push up and blossom anew. And a few oak leaves in sheltered nooks do not wither. *Aster undulatus.* Very few crickets for a long time. At this season we seek warm sunny lees and hillsides, as that under the pitch pines by Walden shore, where we cuddle and warm ourselves in the sun as by a fire, where we may get some of its reflected as well as direct heat.

Coming by Hayden's, I see that, the sun setting, its rays, which yet find some vapor to lodge on in the clear cold air, impart a purple tinge to the mountains in the northwest. Methinks it is only in cold weather I see this.

Richard Harlan, M. D., in his "Fauna Americana" (1825), says of man that those parts are "most hairy, which in animals are most bare, *viz.* the axillæ and pubes."

Harlan says the vespertilio catch insects during the crepusculum.

Harlan says that when white is associated with another color on a dog's tail it is always terminal, and that the observations of Desmarest confirm it.

Oct. 28. Sunset from the Poplar Hill. A warm, moist afternoon. The clouds lift in the west, — indeed the horizon is now clear all around, — and suddenly the light of the setting sun yellows and warms all the

[1] [*Walden*, p. 196; Riv. 277.]

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landscape. The air is filled with a remarkably vaporous haze. The shadows of the trees on the river's edge stretch straight a quarter of a mile into the level russet Great Meadows. The boys are gathering walnuts. Their leaves are a yellowish brown.

8 P. M. — To Cliffs.

The moon beginning to wane. It is a quite warm but moist night. As I cross the railroad I hear the telegraph harp again, the undecayed oracle. Its vibrations are communicated through the tall pole to the surrounding earth for a considerable distance, so that I feel them when I stand near. And when I put my ear to a fence-rail, it is all alive with them, though the post with which it is connected is planted two feet from the telegraph-post; yet the rail resounded with the harp music so that a deaf man might have heard it. I hear no sound of a bird as I go up the back road; only a few faint crickets to be heard, — these the birds we are reduced to. What a puny sound this for the great globe to make!

After whatever revolutions in my moods and experiences, when I come forth at evening, as if from years of confinement to the house, I see the few stars which make the constellation of the Lesser Bear in the same relative position, — the everlasting geometry of the stars. How incredible to be described are these bright points which appear in the blue sky as the darkness increases, said to be other worlds, like the berries on the hills when the summer is ripe! Even the ocean of birds, even the regions of the ether, are studded with isles. Far in this ethereal sea lie the Hesperian isles, unseen

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by day, but when the darkness comes their fires are seen from this shore, as Columbus saw the fires of San Salvador (?). The dew in the withered grass reflects the moonlight like glow-worms. That star which accompanies the moon will not be her companion tomorrow.

The forest has lost so many leaves that its floor and paths are much more checkered with light. I hear no sound but the rustling of the withered leaves, which lulls the few and silent birds to sleep, and, on the wooded hilltops, the roar of the wind. Each tree is a harp which resounds all night, though some have but a few leaves left to flutter and hum. From the Cliffs, the river and pond are exactly the color of the sky. Though the latter is slightly veiled with a thin mist, the outline of the peninsula in it is quite distinct. Even the distant fields across the river are seen to be russet by moonlight as by day, and the young pines near by are green. The ground in the woods is light with fallen leaves. There is a certain tameness or civilization in the rounded lobe of the white oak leaf, very different from the wild, pointed black and red oak leaves, and in its uses and qualities the former is nearer to man. Those trees are comparatively wild whose bark alone is extensively used by man. Returning through Abiel Wheeler's hillside field toward the railroad, I see the springing mullein leaves more distinct than by day. Their leaves are remarkably warm to my hand, compared with the earth or a stone. I should be glad to make my bed of them some time.

Four months of the green leaf make all our summer,

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if I reckon from June 1st to October 1st, the growing season, and methinks there are about four months when the ground is white with snow. That would leave two months for spring and two for autumn. October the month of ripe or painted leaves; November the month of withered leaves and bare twigs and limbs.

As I was eating my dinner of rice to-day, with an open window, a small species of wild bee, with many yellow rings about the abdomen, came in and alighted on the molasses pitcher. It took up the molasses quite fast, and soon made quite bare and white a considerable space on the nose of the pitcher which was smeared with molasses; then, having loaded itself, it circled round the pitcher a few times, while I was helping myself to some molasses, and flew against a closed window, but ere long, finding the open one by which it had entered, it winged its way to its nest. Probably if I had been willing to leave the window open and wait awhile, it would have returned.

I heard one boy say to another in the street to-day, "You don't know much more than a piece of putty."

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VII

NOVEMBER, 1852

(ÆT. 35)

Nov. 1. A warm, mizzling kind of rain for two days past and still. *Stellaria media* in Cheney's garden, as last spring, butter-and-eggs, that small white aster (*A. dumosus?*), the small white fleabane, hedge-mustard.

Day before yesterday to the Cliffs in the rain, misty rain. As I approached their edge, I saw the woods beneath, Fair Haven Pond, and the hills across the river, — which, owing to the mist, was as far as I could see, and seemed much further in consequence. I saw these between the converging boughs of two white pines a rod or two from me on the edge of the rock; and I thought that there was no frame to a landscape equal to this, — to see, between two near pine boughs, whose lichens are distinct, a distant forest and lake, the one frame, the other picture. In November, a man will eat his heart, if in any month. The birches have almost all lost their leaves. On the river this afternoon, the leaves, now crisp and curled, when the wind blows them on to the water become rude boats which float and sail about awhile conspicuously before they go to the bottom, — oaks, walnuts, etc.

It is remarkable how native man proves himself to the earth, after all, and the completeness of his life in

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all its appurtenances. His alliances, how wide! He has domesticated not only beasts but fowl, not only hens and geese and ducks and turkeys, but his doves, winging their way to their dovecots over street and village and field, enhance the picturesqueness of his sky, to say nothing of his trained falcons, his beautiful scouts in the upper air. He is lord of the fowl and the brute. His allies are not only on the land, but in the air and water. The dove, the martin, the bluebird, the swallow, and, in some countries, the hawk have attached themselves to his fortunes. The doves that wing their way so near the clouds, they too are man's retainers.

Nov. 2. Tall buttercups, red clover, houstonias, *Polygonum aviculare*, still.

Those handsome red buds on often red-barked twigs, with some red leaves still left, appear to be blueberry buds. The prinos berries also now attract me in the scarcity of leaves, its own all gone; its berries are apparently a brighter red for it. The month of chickadees and new-swollen buds. At long intervals I see or hear a robin still.

To Walden.

In the latter part of October the skaters and water-bugs entirely disappear from the surface of the pond, and then and in November, when the weather is perfectly calm, it is almost absolutely as smooth as glass. This afternoon a three-days' rain-storm is drawing to an end, though still overcast. The air is quite still but misty, from time to time mizzling, and the pond is very smooth, and its surface difficult to distinguish, though

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it no longer reflects the *bright* tints of autumn but sombre colors only, — calm at the end of a storm, except here and there a slight glimmer or dimple, as if a few skaters which had escaped the frosts were still collected there, or a faint breeze there struck, or a few rain-drops fell there, or perchance the surface, being remarkably smooth, betrayed by circling dimples where a spring welled up from below. I paddled gently toward one of these places and was surprised to find myriads of small perch about five inches long sporting there, one after another rising to the surface and dimpling it, leaving bubbles on it. They were very handsome as they surrounded the boat, with their distinct transverse stripes, a rich brown color. There were many such schools in the pond, as it were improving the short season before the ice would close their window. When I approached them suddenly with noise, they made a sudden plash and rippling with their tails in fright, and then took refuge in the depths. Suddenly the wind rose, the mist increased, and the waves rose, and still the perch leaped, but much higher, half out of water, a hundred black points, three inches long, at once above the surface.[1] The pond, dark before, was now a glorious and indescribable blue, mixed with dark, perhaps the opposite side of the wave, a sort of changeable or watered-silk blue, more cerulean if possible than the sky itself, which was now seen overhead. It required a certain division of the sight, however, to discern this. Like the colors on a steel sword-blade.[2]

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 210, 211; Riv. 296–298.]

[2] [*Walden*, p. 196; Riv. 277.]

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Slate-colored snowbirds (?) with a faint note.

The leaves which are not withered, whose tints are still fresh and bright, are now remarked in sheltered places. Plucked quite a handsome nosegay from the side of Heywood's Peak, — white and blue-stemmed goldenrods, asters (*undulatus* and ?).

I do not know whether the perch amuse themselves thus more in the fall than at any other time. In such transparent and apparently bottomless water their swimming impresses the beholder as a kind of flight or hovering, like a compact flock of birds passing below one, just beneath his level on the right or left.[1] What a singular experience must be theirs in their winter quarters, their long night, expecting when the sun will open their shutters!

If you look discerningly, so as to see the reflection only, you see a most glorious light blue, in comparison with which the original dark green of the opposite side of the waves is but muddy.[2]

Nov. 3. Shepherd's-purse abundant still in gardens.

3 P. M. — To Cliffs and Andromeda Ponds.

In the Heywood Brooks, many young pollywogs two inches long and more; also snails on the bottom. I find these water-bugs, large and small, not on the surface, but apparently sheltered amid the weeds, going into winter quarters. While collecting caddis-worms, of which there are many, whose cases are made of little pieces of weeds piled about them like well-stones, I disturbed

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 210, 211; Riv. 297.]

[2] [*Walden*, p. 196; Riv. 277.]

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a good-sized fish, either a pout or a sucker, near the path. It swam rapidly down this shallow stream, creating a wave which reached from side to side and betrayed it. I followed it down till it concealed itself under some frog-spittle, and when I had dislodged it thence, it went down further, till, coming to where the stream was dammed, it buried itself in the mud above the dam in an instant, and I could not dig it out.

The landscape from Fair Haven Hill looks Novembery, bare gray limbs and twigs in the swamps; and where many young (or shrub) oaks have lost their leaves, you hear the rustling of oak and walnut leaves in the air. There is a ripple on the river from the cool northerly wind. The plants are sere. It is the month of withered oak leaves. The shrub oak plain is all withered. Only one or two butter-and-eggs left. At Andromeda Pond, started nine black (?) ducks just at sunset, as usual they circling far round to look at me. The andromeda is a dull brown like the shrub oak leaves now.

Or I was startled by the cracking of the ground in the coldest nights, which sounded as if it were my house that cracked, and in the morning I would find a crack in the earth a quarter of an inch wide and a quarter of a mile long.[1]

The sunsets begin to be interestingly warm.

Nov. 4. Autumnal dandelion and yarrow.

Must be out-of-doors enough to get experience of wholesome reality, as a ballast to thought and senti-

[1] [*Walden*, p. 301; Riv. 422.]

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ment. Health requires this relaxation, this aimless life. This life in the present. Let a man have thought what he will of Nature in the house, she will still be novel outdoors. I keep out of doors for the sake of the mineral, vegetable, and animal in me.

How precious a fine day early in the spring! — less so in the fall; less still in the summer and winter. Chimaphila[1] sheds its pollen now. Saw witch-hazels out of bloom, some still fresh.

The winds of autumn draw a few strains from the telegraph, after all. At this post it is only a musical hum, but at the next it attains to clearness and reminds me of the isles of Greece. I put my ear to the post. Every fibre resounded with the increasing inflatus, but when it rose into a more melodious and tenser tone it seemed to retire and concentrate itself in the pith of the wood.

There was also Thorer of Steige, in Magnus Barefoot's reign, who was "old and heavy." He gained some victories, but when it went against him could not run. He told his foe, "I am well in hands, but ill on my feet." He "was a man exceedingly stout, both high of stature and thick." So that, when he was hung, his neck gave way and his body fell to the ground. The poet sings: —

> "How the king's thralls hung on the gallows
> Old Thorer and his traitor-fellows."

My thought is a part of the meaning of the world, and hence I use a part of the world as a symbol to express my thought.

[1] ["*Lycopodium dendroideum*" substituted for this in pencil.]

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Nov. 9. *Tuesday. Ranunculus repens, Bidens connata* (flat in a brook), yarrow, dandelion, autumnal dandelion, tansy, *Aster undulatus*, etc. A late three-ribbed goldenrod, with large serratures in middle of the narrow leaves, ten or twelve rays. *Potentilla argentea.* Fore part of November time for walnutting.

All around Walden, both in the thickest wood and where the wood has been cut off, there can be traced a meandering narrow shelf on the steep hillside, the footpath worn by the feet of Indian hunters, and still occasionally trodden by the white man, probably as old as the race of man here. And the same trail may be found encircling all our ponds. Near the sandy eastern shore, where the water is eight or ten feet deep, I have seen from a boat, in calm weather, broad circular heaps of small stones on the bottom, half a dozen feet in diameter by a foot or more in height, where all around was bare sand, — probably the work of some kind of fish.[1]

The French call dragon-flies "demoiselles."

Nov. 11. Did Harris call the water-bug *Gyrinus* to-day?

Nov. 12. 4 P. M. — To Cliffs.

It clears up. A very bright rainbow. Three reds and greens. I see its foot within half a mile in the southeast, heightening the green of the pines. From Fair Haven Hill, I see a very distant, long, low dark-blue cloud, still left, in the northwest horizon beyond

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 199, 200, 205; Riv. 282, 290.]

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the mountains, and against this I see, apparently, a narrow white cloud resting on every mountain and conforming exactly to its outline, — *as if* the white *frilled* edge of the main cloud were turned up over them. In fact, the massive dark-blue cloud beyond revealed these distinct white caps resting on the mountains this side, for twenty miles along the horizon.

The sun having set, my long dark cloud has assumed the form of an alligator, and where the sun has just disappeared it is split into two tremendous jaws, between which glows the eternal city, its crenate lips all coppery golden, its serrate fiery teeth. Its body lies a slumbering mass along the horizon.

Nov. 13. *Saturday.* To Andromeda Ponds. Andromeda is a dull reddish brown, like oak leaves. Saw a flock of little passenger birds [1] by Walden, busily pecking at the white birch catkins; about the size of a chickadee; *distinct* white bar on wings; most with dark pencilled breast, some with whitish; forked tail; bright chestnut or crimson (?) frontlet; yellowish shoulders or sack. When startled, they went off with a jingling sound somewhat like emptying a bag of coin. Is it the yellow redpoll?

Nov. 14. Still yarrow, tall buttercup, and tansy.

Nov. 16. 9 A. M. — Sail up river to Lee's Bridge.

Colder weather and very windy, but still no snow. A very little ice along the edges of the river, which

[1] *Fringilla linaria* [now called *Acanthis linaria*, the redpoll].

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does not all melt before night. Muskrat-houses completed. Interesting objects looking down a river-reach at this season, and our river should not be represented without one or two of these cones. They are quite conspicuous half a mile distant, and are of too much importance to be omitted in the river landscape. I still see the drowned white lily pads showing their red sides. On the meadow side the water is very much soiled by the dashing of the waves. I see one duck. The pines on shore look very cold, reflecting a silvery light. The waves run high, with white caps, and communicate a pleasant motion to the boat. At Lee's Cliff the *Cerastium viscosum*. We sailed up Well Meadow Brook. The water is singularly grayey, clear and cold. The bottom of the brook showing great nuphar roots, like its ribs, with some budding leaves. Returning, landed at Holden's Spruce Swamp. The water is frozen in the pitcher-plant leaf. The swamp-pink and blueberry buds attract.

Nov. 18. Measured a stick of round timber, probably white pine, on the cars this afternoon, — ninety-five feet long, nine and ten twelfths in circumference at butt, and six and two twelfths in circumference at small end, quite straight. From Vermont. Yarrow and tansy still. These are cold, gray days.

Nov. 21. I was surprised this afternoon to find the river skimmed over in some places, and Fair Haven Pond one-third frozen or skimmed over, though commonly there is scarcely any ice to be observed along

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the shores. The commonest bird I see and hear nowadays is that little red crowned or fronted bird I described the 13th. I hear now more music from them. They have a mewing note which reminds me of a canary-bird. They make very good forerunners of winter. Is it not the ruby-crowned wren?[1]

Nov. 23. This morning the ground is white with snow, and it still snows. This is the first time it has been fairly white this season, though once before, many weeks ago, it was slightly whitened for ten or fifteen minutes. It was so warm and still last night at sundown that I remarked to a neighbor that it was moderating to snow. It is, in some degree, also, warmer after the first snow has come and banked up the houses and filled the crevices in the roof. Already the landscape impresses me with a greater sense of fertility. I have not worn gloves yet, though it has been finger-cold. There is something genial even in the first snow, and Nature seems to relent a little of her November harshness. Men, too, are disposed to give thanks for the bounties of the year all over the land, and the sound of the mortar is heard in all houses, and the odor of summer savory reaches even to poets' garrets.

This, then, may be considered the end of the flower season for this year, though this snow will probably soon melt again.

Among the flowers which may be put down as lasting thus far, as I remember, in the order of their hardiness: yarrow, tansy (these very fresh and common),

[1] Lesser redpoll.

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cerastium, autumnal dandelion, dandelion, and perhaps tall buttercup, etc., the last four scarce. The following seen within a fortnight: a late three-ribbed goldenrod of some kind, blue-stemmed goldenrod (these two perhaps within a week), *Potentilla argentea*, *Aster undulatus*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Bidens connata*, shepherd's-purse, etc., etc. N. B.: I have not looked for witch-hazel nor *Stellaria media* lately.

I had a thought in a dream last night which surprised me by its strangeness, as if it were based on an experience in a previous state of existence, and could not be entertained by my waking self. Both the thought and the language were equally novel to me, but I at once perceived it to be true and to coincide with my experience in this state.

3 P. M. — To Cliffs and Walden.

You must go forth early to see the snow on the twigs. The twigs and leaves are all bare now, and the snow half melted on the ground; where the trees are thick it has not reached the ground at all, except in the shape of water in the course of the day. But early this morning the woods presented a very different scene. The beauty and purity of new-fallen snow, lying just as it fell, on the twigs and leaves all the country over, afforded endless delight to the walker. It was a delicate and fairylike scene. But a few hours later the woods were comparatively lumpish and dirty. So, too, you must go forth very early to see a hoar frost, which is rare here; these crisped curls adorn only the forehead of the day. The air is full of low, heavy mist, almost rain. The pines, in this atmosphere and contrasted with the

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snow, are suddenly many degrees darker, and the oaks redder. But still the tops of the dead grass rise above the snow in the fields, and give the country a yellow or russet look. The wetter meadows are quite russet. I am surprised to see Fair Haven entirely skimmed over.

Having descended the Cliff, I go along to the Andromeda Ponds. Sportsmen have already been out with their dogs, improving this first snow to track their game. The andromeda looks somewhat redder than before, a warm reddish brown, with an edging of yellowish sedge or coarse grass about the swamp, and red rustling shrub oak hills with a white ground rising around. These swamps, resorted to by the muskrat and ducks, most remind me of the Indian.

The mist so low is clouds close to the ground, and the steam of the engine also hugs the earth in the Cut, concealing all objects for a great distance.

Though the parents cannot determine whether the child shall be male or female, yet, methinks, it depends on them whether he shall be a worthy addition to the human family.

Nov. 24. At this time last year the andromeda in the Ministerial Swamp was red. Now it has not turned from brown.

Nov. 25. At Walden. — I hear at sundown what I mistake for the squawking of a hen, — for they are firing at chickens hereabouts, — but it proved to be a flock of wild geese going south. This proves how much the voices of all fowls are alike.

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Nov. 27. Almost an Indian-summer day. The shrub oaks and the sprouts make woods you can look down on. They are now our rustling gardens. The leaves of the former are now a very handsome leather-color, whiter on the under side, clear and firm; smooth, and not shrivelled nor dimmed. It is a new color for a garden; something foreign and Oriental, even, it suggests. I find acorns which have sent a shoot down into the earth this fall.

Like many of my contemporaries I had rarely for many years used animal food, or tea or coffee, etc., etc., not so much because of any ill effects which I had traced to them in my own case, though I could theorize extensively in that direction, as because it was not agreeable to my imagination. It appeared more beautiful to live low and fare hard in many respects; and though I never did so, I went just far enough to please my imagination. But now I find myself somewhat less particular in these respects. I carry less religion to the table, ask no blessing, not because I am wiser than I was, but, I am obliged to confess, because, however much it is to be regretted, with years I have grown more coarse and indifferent. The repugnance to animal food and the rest is not the result of experience, but is an instinct.[1]

Nov. 29, 30, and *Dec.* 1. The snow which fell the 23d whitened the ground but a day or two. These have been the mildest and pleasantest days since November came in.

November 29th, walked in P. M. to old stone bridge and down bank of river by Sam Barrett's house.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 237, 240; Riv. 334, 338.]

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When I stood on the caving swallow banks by the bridge about 4 o'clock, the sun sank below some clouds, or they rose above it, and it shone out with that bright, calm, memorable light which I have elsewhere described, lighting up the pitch pines and everything. The patches of winter rye, at this season so green by contrast, are an interesting feature in the landscape. When I got out of the wood, going toward Barrett's, the softness of the sunlight on the russet landscape, the smooth russet grassy fields and meadows, was very soothing, the sun now getting low in a November day. The stems and twigs of the maples, etc., looking down the river, were beautifully distinct. You see distinctly the form of the various clumps of maples and birches. Geese in river swam as fast as I walked. Many broken but apparently rather recent turtles' eggs on the bank.

Nov. 30. To Pine Hill.

The buds of the *Populus tremuloides* show their down as in early spring, and the early willows. Woodchoppers have commenced some time since. This is another pleasant day. From Pine Hill, Wachusett is seen over Walden. The country seems to slope up from the west end of Walden to the mountain. Already, a little after 4 o'clock, the sparkling windows and vanes of the village, seen under and against the faintly purple-tinged, slate-colored mountains, remind me of a village in a mountainous country at twilight, where early lights appear. I think that this peculiar sparkle without redness, a cold glitter, is peculiar to this season.

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VIII

DECEMBER, 1852

(ÆT. 35)

Dec. 1. To Cliffs.

The snow keeps off unusually. The landscape is the color of a russet apple which has no golden cheek. The sunset sky supplies that. But though it be crude to bite, it yields a pleasant acid flavor. The year looks back toward summer, and a summer smile is reflected in her face. There is in these days a coolness in the air which makes me hesitate to call them Indian summer. At this season I observe the form of the buds which are prepared for spring, — the large bright yellowish and reddish buds of the swamp-pink, the already downy once of the *Populus tremuloides* and the willows, the red ones of the blueberry, etc., the long, sharp ones of the amelanchier, the spear-shaped ones of the viburnum, etc.; also the catkins of the alders and birches.

Dec. 2. The pleasantest day of all.

Started in boat before 9 A. M. down river to Billerica with W. E. C.

Not wind enough for a sail. I do not remember when I have taken a sail or a row on the river in December before. We had to break the ice about the boat-house for some distance. Still no snow. The banks

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are white with frost. The air is calm, and the water smooth. The distant sounds of cars, cocks, hounds, etc., as we glide past N. Barrett's farm, remind me of spring. It is an anticipation, a looking through winter to spring. There is a certain resonance and elasticity in the air that makes the least sound melodious as in spring. The old unpainted houses under their trees (Joel Barrett's ?) look as if winter had come and gone. There is one side of Abner (?) Buttrick's, painted as if with the pumpkin pies left over after Thanksgiving, it is so singular a yellow. The river has risen since the last rain a few feet, and partially floods the meadow. See still two ducks on the meadow. Hear the jay in distant copses, and the ruby-crowned wren (?) [1] flies and mews over. Some parts of the meadow are covered with thin ice, through which we row, — which yet lasts all day, — and the waves we make in the river nibble and crumble its edge, and produce a rustling of the grass and reeds, as if a muskrat were stirring.

We land behind Tarbell's and walk inland. How warm in the hollows! The outline of the hills is very agreeable there; ridgy hills, with backs to them, and a perfect cow-path winds along the side of one. They have such weight to carry that they select the easiest course.

Again embark. It is remarkably calm and warm in the sun, now that we have brought a hill between us and the wind. There goes a muskrat. He leaves so long a ripple behind that in this light you cannot tell where his body ends, and think him longer than he is.

[1] *Fringilla linaria.*

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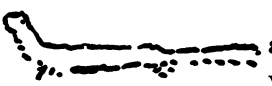
This is a glorious river-reach. At length we pass the bridge. Everywhere the muskrat-houses line the shores, — or what *was* the shore, — some three feet high and regularly sharp as the Peak of Teneriffe.

C. says, "Let us land" (in an orchard by Atkins's (?) boathouse). "The angle of inc*idents* should be equal to the angle of reflection." We did so. By the island where I formerly camped, half a mile or more above the bridge on the road from Chelmsford to Bedford, we saw a mink, a slender black (at ten rods' distance; Emmons says they are a "dark glossy brown"), very like a weasel in form. He alternately ran along on the ice and swam in the water, now and then holding up his head and long neck  and looking at us. Not so shy as a muskrat, but I should say very black. The muskrats would curl up into a ball on the ice, decidedly reddish brown. The ice made no show, being thin and dark. Mink's head is larger in proportion to body than the muskrat's, not so sharp and rat-like.

Left our boat just above the last-named bridge on west side. A bright dazzling sheen for miles on the river as you looked up it. Crossed the bridge, turned into a path on the left, and ascended a hill a mile and a half off, between us and Billerica, somewhat off from the river. The Concord affords the water prospects of a larger river, like the Connecticut even. Hereabouts I found a spear-head, by a mysterious little building. Dined on the hill, from which we saw Billerica centre, a mile and a half northerly. We had crossed what by

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the map must be the brook from Nutting's Pond. On the west side of the river in Billerica here, is a grand range of hills, somewhat cliffy, covered with young oaks, whose leaves now give it a red appearance, even when seen from Ball's Hill. It is one of the most interesting and novel features in the river scenery.

Men commonly talk as if genius were something proper to an individual. I esteem it but a common privilege, and if one does not enjoy it now, he may congratulate his neighbor that *he* does. There is no place for man-worship. We understand very well a man's relation, not to *his* genius, but to the genius.

Returning, the water is smoother and more beautiful than ever. The ripples we make produce ribbed reflections or shadows on the dense but leafless bushes on shore, thirty or forty rods distant, very regular, and so far that they seem motionless and permanent. Again we see the mink, plainer than ever. The smooth river-reaches, so calm and glorious in this light, "I see, not feel, how beautiful they are." All the water behind us as we row (and even on the right and left at a distance) is perfectly unrippled, we move so fast; but before us, down-stream, it is all in commotion from shore to shore. There are some fine shadows on those grand red oaken hills in the north. What a fine color to last through summer!

We look at Atkins's boathouse, ugly, like a barn carried off and lodged in the river. A muskrat had made his cabin in the bathing-apartment. Man's boat-house is a deformity, but the muskrats' cabins are an ornament to the river. The squareness of the former

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building, roof and all, offend. Could not the architect take a hint from the pyramidal or conical form of the muskrat's house? Something of this form and color, like a large haycock in the meadow, would be in harmony with the scenery. The muskrat's house is made in the midst of weeds or bushes commonly, which protect it from the waves. When a muskrat comes to the surface too near you, how quickly and with what force he turns and plunges again, making a sound in the calm water as if you had thrown into it a large stone with violence!

Long did it take to sink the Carlisle Bridge. The reflections after sunset were distinct and glorious, — the heaven into which we unceasingly rowed. I thought now that the angle of reflection was greater than the angle of inci*dents*. It cooler grew. The stars came out soon after we turned Ball's Hill, and it became difficult to distinguish our course. The boatman knows a river by reaches. We ran part way into several holts, or *poke-logans*. Got home in the dark, our feet and legs numb and cold with sitting and inactivity, having been about eight miles by river, etc. It was some time before we recovered the full use of our cramped legs. I forgot to speak of the afterglows. The twilight, in fact, had several stages to it, and several times after it had grown dusky the twilight acquired a new transparency, and the trees on the hillsides were lit up again.

Dec. 5. P. M. — Rowed over Walden!

A dark, but warm, misty day, completely overcast.

This great rise of the pond after an interval of many

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years, and the water standing at this great height for a year or more, kills the shrubs and trees about its edge, — pitch pines, birches, alders, aspens, etc., — and, falling again, leaves an unobstructed shore. The rise and fall of the pond serves this use at least. This fluctuation, though it makes it difficult to walk round it when the water is highest, by killing the trees makes it so much the easier and more agreeable when the water is low. By this fluctuation, this rise of its waters after long intervals, it asserts its title to a shore, and the trees cannot hold it by right of possession. But unlike those waters which are subject to a daily tide, its shore is cleanest when the water is lowest. I have been surprised to observe how surely the water standing for a few months about such trees would kill them. On the side of the pond next my house a row of pitch pines fifteen feet high was killed and tipped over as if by a lever, and thus a stop put to their encroachments; and their size may indicate how many years had elapsed since the last rise.[1] I have been surprised to see what a rampart has been formed about many ponds, — in one place at Walden, but especially at Flint's Pond, where it occurs between the pond and a swamp, as if it were the remains of an Indian swamp fort, — apparently by the action of the waves and the ice, several feet in height and containing large stones and trees. These lips of the lake, on which no beard grows. It licks its chaps from time to time.[2]

I saw some dimples on the surface, and, thinking it

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 201, 202; Riv. 284, 285.]

[2] [*Walden*, p. 202; Riv. 285.]

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was going to rain hard immediately, the air being full of mist, I made haste to take my place at the oars to row homeward. Already the rain seemed rapidly increasing, though I felt none on my cheek, and I anticipated a thorough soaking; but suddenly the dimples ceased, for they were produced by the perch which the noise of my oars had scared into the depths. I saw their schools dimly disappearing.[1]

I have said that Walden has no visible inlet nor outlet, but it is on the one hand distantly and indirectly related to Flint's Pond, which is more elevated, by a chain of small ponds coming from that quarter, and on the other hand directly and manifestly related to Concord River, which is lower, by a similar chain of ponds, through which in some other geological period it may have flowed thither, and by a little digging, which God forbid, could probably be made to flow thither again. If, by living thus "reserved and austere" like a hermit in the woods so long, it has acquired such wonderful depth and purity, who would not regret that the impure waters of Flint's Pond should be mingled with it, or itself should go waste its sweetness in the ocean wave?[2]

Dec. 6. Though foul weather yesterday, this is the warmest and pleasantest day yet. Cows are turned out to pasture again. On the Corner causeway fine cobwebs glimmer in the air, covering the willow twigs and the road, and sometimes stretching from side to side

[1] [*Walden*, p. 211; Riv. 298.]

[2] [*Walden*, p. 215; Riv. 303, 304.]

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above my head. I see many little gnat-like insects in the air there. Tansy still fresh, and I saw autumnal dandelion a few days since. In the evening I see the spearer's light on the river. Saw a great slate-colored hawk sail away from the Cliffs.

Dec. 7. P. M. — Perhaps the warmest day yet. True Indian summer. The walker perspires. The shepherd's-purse is in full bloom; the andromeda not turned red. Saw a pile of snow-fleas in a rut in the wood-path, six or seven inches long and three quarters of an inch high, to the eye exactly like powder, as if a sportsman had spilled it from his flask; and when a stick was passed through the living and skipping mass, each side of the furrow preserved its edge as in powder.

Dec. 8. Another Indian-summer day. Saw some puffballs in the woods, wonderfully full of sulphur-like dust, which yellowed my shoes, greenish-yellow. The recent water-line at Walden is quite distinct, though like the limit of a shadow, on the alders about eighteen inches above the present level. One cannot burn or bury even his old shoes without a feeling of sadness and compassion; much more [*sic*] his old body, without a slight sense of guilt.

Dec. 9. P. M. — To C. Smith's Hill.

Those little ruby-crowned wrens (?)[1] still about. They suddenly dash away from this side to that in flocks, with a tumultuous note, half jingle, half rattle,

[1] Lesser redpolls.

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like nuts shaken in a bag, or a bushel of nutshells, soon returning to the tree they had forsaken on some alarm. They are oftenest seen on the white birch, apparently feeding on its seeds, scattering the scales about.

A fresh dandelion.

The chestnuts are almost as plenty as ever, both in the fallen burs and out of them. There are more this year than the squirrels can consume. I picked three pints this afternoon, and though some bought at a store the other day were more than half mouldy, I did not find one mouldy one among these which I picked from under the wet and mouldy leaves, where they have been snowed on once. Probably they do not heat, though wet. These are also still plump and tender. I love to gather them, if only for the sense of the bountifulness of nature they give me.[1]

A few petals of the witch-hazel still hold on.

In the "Homes of American Authors" it is said of most that at one time they wrote for the *North American Review*. It is one of my qualifications that I have not written an article for the *North American Review*.

A man tells me he saw a violet to-day.

Very nice; as the old lady said when she had got a gravestone for her husband.

Dec. 12. Cold at last. Saw a violet on the C. Miles road where the bank had been burned in the fall. *Bœomyces roseus* also. Tansy still fresh yellow by the Corner Bridge. From Cliffs I see snow on the

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 197; Riv. 241. See also p. 462 (Jan. 10, 1853).]

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mountains. Last night's rain was snow there, then. They now have a parti-colored look, like the skin of a pard, as if they were spread with a saddle-cloth for Boreas to ride. I hear of a cultivated rose blossoming in a garden in Cambridge within a day or two. The buds of the aspen are large and show wool in the fall.

Dec. 13. Walk early through the woods to Lincoln to survey. Winter weather may be said to have begun yesterday. River and ponds all open. Goose Pond skimmed over. Why have I ever omitted early rising and a morning walk?

As we walked over the Cedar Hill, Mr. Weston asked me if I had ever noticed how the frost formed around a particular weed in the grass, and no other. It was a clear cold morning. We stooped to examine, and I observed, about the base of the *Lechea major* (?), or larger pinweed,[1] the frost formed into little flattened trumpets or bells, an inch or more long, with the mouth down about the base of the stem. They were very conspicuous, dotting the grass white. But what was most remarkable was that, though there were plenty of other dead weeds and grasses about, no other species exhibited this phenomenon. I think it can hardly be because of the form of its top, and that therefore the moisture is collected and condensed and flows down its stem particularly. It may have something to do with the life of the root, which I noticed was putting forth shoots *beneath*. Perhaps this growth generates heat

[1] ["*Lechea* . . . pinweed" crossed out in pencil and "cistus" substituted.]

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and so steam. He said that his cows never touched that weed. I judge from his account of the rise and fall of Flint's Pond that, allowing for the disturbance occasioned by its inlets and outlet, it sympathizes with Walden.[1]

I observed a mouse run down a bush by the pond-side. I approached and found that he had neatly covered over a thrasher or other bird's nest (it was made partly of sticks like a thrasher's), about four or five feet from the ground, and lined it warmly with that common kind of green moss (?) which grows about the base of oaks, but chiefly with a kind [of] vegetable wool, perhaps from the wool-grass. He appeared to be a reddish brown above and cream-colored beneath, and ran swiftly down the stems. I think it must be the *Gerbillus Canadensis*, or perhaps the *Arvicola Emmonsii*, or maybe the *Arvicola hirsutus*, meadow mouse.[2]

Began to snow at noon. This the third snow; the first lasted half an hour on ground; the second, two or three days.

Dec. 14. *Tuesday.* P. M. — To Assabet Stone Bridge.

We have now the scenery of winter, though the snow is but an inch or two deep. The dried chalices of the *Rhexia Virginica* stand above the snow, and the cups of the blue-curls and the long sharp red capsules of the small (?) hypericum, etc., etc., johnswort; and a new era commences with the dried herbs.

[1] [*Walden*, p. 201; Riv. 284.]

[2] *Vide* forward to Dec. 30th.

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Ah, who can tell the serenity and clarity of a New England winter sunset? This could not be till the cold and the snow came. Ah, what isles those western clouds! in what a sea! Just after sunset there is a broad pillar of light for many minutes in the west.

Dec. 15. Saw a small flock of geese go over.

One's *life*, the enterprise he is here upon, should certainly be a grand fact to consider, not a mean or insignificant one. A man should not live without a purpose, and that purpose must surely be a grand one. But is this fact of "our life" commonly but a puff of air, a flash in the pan, a smoke, a nothing? It does not afford arena for a tragedy.

Dec. 16. Observed the reflection of the snow on Pine Hill from Walden, extending far beyond the true limits of a reflection, quite across the pond; also, less obviously, of pines. The sky overcast with thick scud, which, in the reflection, the snow ran into.

Dec. 18. P. M. — To Annursnack.

Sedum Telephium, garden orpine or live-for-ever; I think this is the plant with a sort of pineapple-leaved and sheathed bulbs, on a rock between Cox's and Heywood's.[1] Saw where a red squirrel (tinged gray) had

[1] No. *Sempervivum tectorum*.

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been eating the hips of a sweet-briar, which had apparently grown recently, leaves still fresh and green. Very cold, windy day. The crust of the slight snow covered in some woods with the scales (bird-shaped) of the birch, and their seeds. Loring's Pond beautifully frozen. So polished a surface, I mistook many parts of it for water. It was *waved* or *watered* with a slight dust nevertheless. Cracked into large squares like the faces of a reflector, it was so exquisitely polished that the sky and scudding dun-colored clouds, with mother-o'-pearl tints, were reflected in it as in the calmest water. I slid over it with a little misgiving, mistaking the ice before me for water. This is the first skating. Still the little ruby-crowned birds about.

Dec. 22. *Wednesday.* Surveying the Hunt Farm this and the 20th.

C. says that Flint's Pond was frozen *over* yesterday. A rambling, rocky, wild, moorish pasture, this of Hunt's, with two or three great white oaks to shade the cattle, which the farmer would not take fifty dollars apiece for, though the ship-builder wanted them. The snow balled so badly to-day while I was working in the swamp, that I was set up full four inches. It is pleasant, cutting a path through the bushes in a swamp, to see the color of the different woods, — the yellowish dogwood, the green prinos (?), and, on the upland, the splendid yellow barberry. The squirrel, rabbit, fox tracks, etc., attract the attention in the new-fallen snow; and the squirrel nests, bunches of grass and leaves high

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in the trees, more conspicuous if not larger now, or the glimpse of a meadow (?) mouse, give occasion for a remark. You cannot go out so early but you will find the track of some wild creature. Returning home just after the sun had sunk below the horizon, I saw from N. Barrett's a fire made by boys on the ice near the Red Bridge, which looked like a bright reflection of a setting sun from the water under the bridge, so clear, so little lurid, in this winter evening air.

Dec. 27. Monday. Not a particle of ice in Walden to-day. Paddled across it. I took my new boat out. A black and white duck on it, Flint's and Fair Haven being frozen up. Ground bare. River open. Countless birches, white pines, etc., have been killed within a year or two about Goose Pond by the high water. The dead birches have broken in two in the middle and fallen over. In some coves where the water is shallow, their wrecks make quite a dense thicket. Found chestnuts quite plenty to-day.

Dec. 28. Brought my boat from Walden in rain. No snow on ground. Grass in the churchyard and elsewhere green as in the spring.

I omitted some observations apparently between the 18th and 22d, to the effect that the berries that hold on into winter are to be remarked, — the winterberry, alder and birch fruit, smilax, pyrus, hips, etc.

Both for bodily and mental health, court the present. Embrace health wherever you find her. A clump of birches raying out from one centre make a more agree-

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able object than a single tree. The rosettes in the ice, as Channing calls them, now and for some time have attracted me.

It is worth the while to apply what wisdom one has to the conduct of his life, surely. I find myself oftenest wise in little things and foolish in great ones. That I may accomplish some particular petty affair well, I live my whole life coarsely. A broad margin of leisure is as beautiful in a man's life as in a book. Haste makes waste, no less in life than in housekeeping. Keep the time, observe the hours of the universe, not of the cars. What are threescore years and ten hurriedly and coarsely lived to moments of divine leisure in which your life is coincident with the life of the universe? We live too fast and coarsely, just as we eat too fast, and do not know the true savor of our food. We consult our will and understanding and the expectation of men, not our genius. I can impose upon myself tasks which will crush me for life and prevent all expansion, and this I am but too inclined to do.

One moment of life costs many hours, hours not of business but of preparation and invitation. Yet the man who does not betake himself at once and desperately to sawing is called a loafer, though he may be knocking at the doors of heaven all the while, which shall surely be opened to him. That aim in life is highest which requires the highest and finest discipline. How much, what infinite, leisure it requires, as of a lifetime, to appreciate a single phenomenon! You must camp down beside it as for life, having reached your land of promise, and give yourself wholly to it. It must

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stand for the whole world to you, symbolical of all things. The least partialness is your own defect of sight and cheapens the experience fatally. Unless the humming of a gnat is as the music of the spheres, and the music of the spheres is as the humming of a gnat, they are naught to me. It is not communications to serve for a history, — which are science, — but the great story itself, that cheers and satisfies us.

As I have not observed the rainbow on the *Juncus militaris* nor the andromeda red the past fall, it suggests a great difference in seasons.

Dec. 30. In Audubon's Animals: —
Sigmodon hispidum, Say and Ord.
Marsh-Rat of Lawson's Carolina.
Wood-Rat, Bartram's Travels in Florida.
Arvicola hispidus, Godman.
Arvicola hortensis of Griffith and of Cuvier.
The plate of this *resembles* my mouse of December 13th.

Dec. 31. I was this afternoon gathering chestnuts at Saw Mill Brook. I have within a few weeks spent some hours thus, scraping away the leaves with my hands and feet over some square rods, and have at least learned how chestnuts are planted and new forests raised. First fall the chestnuts with the severe frosts, the greater part of them at least, and then, at length, the rains and winds bring down the leaves which cover them with a thick coat. I have wondered sometimes how the nuts got planted which merely fell

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on to the surface of the earth, but already I find the nuts of the present year partially mixed with the mould, as it were, under the decaying and mouldy leaves, where is all the moisture and manure they want. A large proportion of this year's nuts are now covered loosely an inch deep under mouldy leaves, though they are themselves sound, and are moreover concealed from squirrels thus.[1]

It is a sort of frozen rain this afternoon, which does not wet one, but makes the still bare ground slippery with a coating of ice, and stiffens your umbrella so that it cannot be shut. Will not the trees look finely in the morning?

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 196; Riv. 240, 241.]

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IX

JANUARY, 1853

(ÆT. 35)

Jan. 1. *Saturday.* This morning we have something between ice and frost on the trees, etc. The whole earth, as last night, but much more, is encased in ice, which on the plowed fields makes a singular icy coat a quarter of an inch or more in thickness. About 9 o'clock A. M., I go to Lee's *via* Hubbard's Wood and Holden's Swamp and the riverside, for the middle is open. The stones and cow-dung, and the walls too, are all cased in ice on the north side. The latter look like alum rocks. This, not frozen mist or frost, but frozen drizzle, collected around the slightest cores, gives prominence to the least withered herbs and grasses. Where yesterday was a plain, smooth field, appears now a teeming crop of fat, *icy* herbage. The stems of the herbs on their north sides are enlarged from ten to a hundred times. The addition is so universally on the north side that a traveller could not lose the points of compass to-day, though it should [be] never so dark, for every blade of grass would serve to guide him, telling from which side the storm came yesterday. These straight stems of grasses stand up like white batons or sceptres, and make conspicuous foreground to the landscape, from six inches to three feet high. C. thought that these fat, icy branches on the withered grass and

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herbs had no nucleus, but looking closer I showed him the fine black wiry threads on which they impinged, which made him laugh with surprise. The very cow-dung is incrusted, and the clover and sorrel send up a dull-green gleam through their icy coat, like strange plants. The pebbles in the plowed land are seen as through a transparent coating of gum. Some weeds bear the ice in masses, some, like the trumpet-weed and tansy, in balls for each dried flower. What a crash of jewels as you walk! The most careless walker, who never deigned to look at these humble weeds before, cannot help observing them now. This is why the herbage is left to stand dry in the fields all winter. Upon a solid foundation of ice stand out, pointing in all directions between northwest and northeast, or within the limits of ninety degrees, little spicula or crystallized points, half an inch or more in length.

Upon the dark, glazed plowed ground, where a mere wiry stem rises, its north side is thickly clad with these snow-white spears, like some Indian's head-dress, as if it had attracted all the frost. I saw a prinos bush full of large berries, by the wall in Hubbard's field. Standing on the west side, the contrast of the red berries with their white incrustation or prolongation on the north was admirable. I thought I had never seen the berries so dazzlingly bright. The whole north side of the bush, berries and stock, was beautifully incrusted. And when I went round to the north side, the redness of the berries came softened through and tingeing the allied snow-white bush, like an evening sky beyond. These adjoined snow or ice berries being beset, within

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the limits of ninety degrees on the north, with those icy prickles or spicula, between which the red glow and sometimes the clear red itself appeared, gave it the appearance of a raspberry bush full of over-ripe fruit.

Standing on the north side of a bush or tree, looking against the sky, you see only a white ghost of a tree, without a mote of earthiness, but as you go round it, the dark core comes into view. It makes all the odds imaginable whether you are travelling north or south. The drooping birches along the edges of woods are the most feathery, fairy-like ostrich plumes of the trees, and the color of their trunks increases the delusion. The weight of the ice gives to the pines the forms which northern trees, like the firs, constantly wear, bending and twisting the branches; for the twigs and plumes of the pines, being frozen, remain as the wind held them, and new portions of the trunk are exposed. Seen from the north, there is no greenness in the pines, and the character of the tree is changed. The willows along the edge of the river look like sedge in meadows. The sky is overcast, and a fine snowy hail and rain is falling, and these ghost-like trees make a scenery which reminds you of Spitzbergen. I see now the beauty of the causeway, by the bridge alders below swelling into the road, overtopped by willows and maples. The fine grasses and shrubs in the meadow rise to meet and mingle with the drooping willows, and the whole make an indistinct impression like a mist, and between this the road runs toward those white ice-clad ghostly or fairy trees in the distance, — toward spirit-land. The pines are as white as a counterpane, with raised em-

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broidery and white tassels and fringes. Each fascicle of leaves or needles is held apart by an icy club surmounted by a little snowy or icy ball. Finer than the Saxon arch is this path running under the pines, roofed, not with crossing boughs, but drooping ice-covered twigs in irregular confusion. See in the midst of this stately pine, towering like the solemn ghost of a tree, the white ice-clad boughs of other trees appearing, of a different character; sometimes oaks with leaves incrusted, or fine-sprayed maples or walnuts. But finer than all, this red oak, its leaves incrusted like shields a quarter of an inch thick, and a thousand fine spicula, like long serrations at right angles with their planes, upon their edges. It has an indescribably rich effect, with color of the leaf coming softened through the ice, a delicate fawn-color of many shades. Where the plumes of the pitch pine are short and spreading close upon the trunk, sometimes perfect cups or rays are formed. Pitch pines present rough, massy grenadier plumes, with each a darker spot or cavity in the end, where you look in to the buds.

I listen to the booming of the pond as if it were a reasonable creature. I return at last in a rain, and am coated with a glaze, like the fields.

Being at Cambridge day before yesterday, Sibley told me that Agassiz told him that Harris was the greatest entomologist in the world, and gave him permission to repeat his remark. As I stood on the top of a ladder, he came along with his hand full of papers and inquired, "Do you value autographs?" "No, I do not," I answered slowly and gravely. "Oh, I did n't know

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but you did. I had some of Governor Dunlap," said he, retreating.

After talking with Uncle Charles the other night about the worthies of this country, Webster and the rest, as usual, considering who were geniuses and who not, I showed him up to bed, and when I had got into bed myself, I heard his chamber door opened, after eleven o'clock, and he called out, in an earnest, stentorian voice, loud enough to wake the whole house, "Henry! was John Quincy Adams a genius?" "No, I think not," was my reply. "Well, I did n't think he was," answered he.

Jan. 2. 9 A. M. — Down railroad to Cliffs.

A clear day; a pure sky with cirrhi. In this clear air and bright sunlight, the ice-covered trees have a new beauty, especially the birches along under the edge of Warren's wood on each side of the railroad, bent quite to the ground in every kind of curve. At a distance, as you are approaching them endwise, they look like white tents of Indians under the edge of the wood. The birch is thus remarkable, perhaps, because from the feathery form of the tree, whose numerous small branches sustain so great a weight, bending it to the ground, and moreover because, from the color of the bark, the core is less observable. The oaks not only are less pliant in the trunk, but have fewer and stiffer twigs and branches. The birches droop over in all directions, like ostrich-feathers. Most wood-paths are impassable now to a carriage, almost to a foot traveller, from the number of saplings and boughs

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bent over even to the ground in them. Both sides of the Deep Cut now shine in the sun, as if silver-plated, and the fine spray of a myriad bushes on the edge of the bank sparkle like silver. The telegraph-wire is coated to ten times its size, and looks like a slight fence scalloping along at a distance. Is merged in nature. When we climb the bank at Stow's wood-lot and come upon the piles of freshly split white pine wood (for he is ruthlessly laying it waste), the transparent ice, like a thick varnish, beautifully exhibits the color of the clear, tender, yellowish wood (pumpkin pine?), and its grain, and we pick our way over a bed of pine boughs and twigs a foot or two deep, covering the ground, each twig and needle thickly incrusted with ice into one vast gelid mass, which our feet cronch as if we were walking through the cellar of some confectioner to the gods. The invigorating scent of the recently cut pines refreshes us, if that is any atonement for this devastation. The beauty of the oak-tops all silvered o'er. Especially now do I notice the hips, barberries, and winterberries, for their red. The red or purplish catkins of the alders are interesting as a winter fruit, and also of the birch. But few birds about. Apparently their granaries are locked up in ice, with which the grasses and buds are coated. Even far in the horizon the pine-tops are turned to firs or spruce by the weight of the ice bending them down, so that they look like a spruce swamp. No two trees wear the ice alike. The short plumes and needles of the spruce make a very pretty and peculiar figure. I see some oaks in the distance which, by their branches being curved or arched down-

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ward and massed, are turned into perfect elms, which suggests that that is the peculiarity of the elm. Few if any other trees are thus wisp-like, the branches gracefully drooping. I mean some slender red and white oaks which have recently been left in a clearing. Just apply a weight to the ends of the boughs, which will cause them to droop on all sides, and to each particular twig, which will mass them together, and you have perfect elms. Seen at the right angle, each ice-incrusted stubble shines like a prism with some color of the rainbow, — intense blue, or violet, and red. The smooth field, clad the other day with a low, wiry grass, is now converted into rough stubble-land, where you walk with cronching feet. It is remarkable that the trees ever recover from this burden which bends them to the ground. I should like to weigh a limb of this pitch pine. The character of the tree is changed.

I have now passed the bars and am approaching the Cliffs. The forms and variety of the ice are particularly rich here, there are so many low bushes and weeds before me as I ascend toward the sun, especially very small white pines almost merged in the ice-incrusted ground. All objects, even the apple trees and rails, are to the eye polished silver. It is a perfect land of faery. As if the world were a great frosted cake with its ornaments. The boughs gleam like silver candlesticks. Le Jeune describes the same in Canada, in 1636, as "*nos grands bois ne paroissoient qu'une forest de cristal.*" The silvery ice stands out an inch by three fourths [of] an inch in width on the north side of every twig of these apple trees, with rich irregularities of its own in

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its edge. When I stoop and examine some fat icy stubble in my path, I find for all core a ridiculous wiry russet thread, scarce visible, not a hundredth part its size, which breaks with the ice under my feet; yet where this has a minute stub of a branch only a fortieth of an inch in length, there is a corresponding clumsy icy protuberance on the surface an eighth of an inch off. Nature works with such luxuriance and fury that she follows the least hint. And on the twigs of bushes, for each bud there is a corresponding icy swelling.

The bells are particularly sweet this morning. I hear more, methinks, than ever before. How much more religion in their sound, than they ever call men together to! Men obey their call and go to the stove-warmed church, though God exhibits himself to the walker in a frosted bush to-day, as much as in a burning one to Moses of old.

We build a fire on the Cliffs. When kicking to pieces a pine stump for the fat knots which alone would burn in this icy day, at the risk of spoiling my boots, having looked in vain for a stone, I thought how convenient would be an Indian stone axe to batter it with. The bark of white birch, though covered with ice, burned well. We soon had a roaring fire of fat pine on a shelf of rock, from which we overlooked the icy landscape. The sun, too, was melting the ice on the rocks, and the water was bubbling and pulsing downward in dark bubbles, exactly like pollywogs. What a good word is "flame," expressing the form and soul of fire, lambent with forked tongue! We lit a fire to see it rather than to feel it, it is so rare a sight these days. To have our

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eyes ache once more with smoke! What a peculiar, perhaps indescribable color has this flame! — a reddish or lurid yellow, not so splendid or full of light as of life and heat. These fat roots made much flame, and a very black smoke, commencing where the flame left off, which cast fine flickering shadows on the rocks. There was some bluish-white smoke from the rotten part of the wood. Then there was the fine white ashes, which farmers' wives sometimes use for pearlash. Fire is the most tolerable third party. I hear the wiry *phœbe* note of the chickadee, as if the spring were coming in. Brown thinks my ruby wren may be the lesser redpoll linnet.

Walden begins to freeze in the coves or shallower water on the north [1] side, where it was slightly skimmed over several weeks ago.

Jan. 3. Down railroad to Lincoln Bridge.

The evergreens appear to relieve themselves soonest of the ice, perhaps because of the reflection from their leaves. Those trees, like the maples and hickories, which have most spray and branches make the finest show of ice. This afternoon it snows, the snow lodging on the ice, which still adheres to the trees. The more completely the trees are changed to ice trees, to spirits of trees, the finer. Instead of the minute frostwork on a window, you have whole forests of silver boughs. I refer to the last two days. The "brattling" of the ice. Is not that the word? Along some causeway or fence in the meadow, the trees are changed into

[1] [Queried in pencil.]

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silvery wisps. Nothing dark met the eye, but a silvery sheen, precisely as if the whole tree — trunk, boughs, and twigs — were converted into burnished silver. You exclaimed at every hedgerow. Sometimes a clump of birches fell over every way in graceful ostrich-plumes, all raying from one centre. You clambered over them like an ant in the grass. Then the beautifully checkered ice in the ruts, where the water had been soaked up, surpassing the richest tracery of watch-crystals! Suddenly all is converted to crystal. The world is a crystal palace. The trees, stiff and drooping and encased in ice, looked as if they were sculptured in marble, especially the evergreens.

I love Nature partly *because* she is not man, but a retreat from him. None of his institutions control or pervade her. There a different kind of right prevails. In her midst I can be glad with an entire gladness. If this world were all man, I could not stretch myself, I should lose all hope. He is constraint, she is freedom to me. He makes me wish for another world. She makes me content with this. None of the joys she supplies is subject to his rules and definitions. What he touches he taints. In thought he moralizes. One would think that no free, joyful labor was possible to him. How infinite and pure the least pleasure of which Nature is basis, compared with the congratulation of mankind! The joy which Nature yields is like [that] afforded by the frank words of one we love.

> Man, man is the devil,
> The source of all evil.

Methinks that these prosers, with their saws and their

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laws, do not know how glad a man can be. What wisdom, what warning, can prevail against gladness? There is no law so strong which a little gladness may not transgress. I have a room all to myself; it is nature. It is a place beyond the jurisdiction of human governments. Pile up your books, the records of sadness, your saws and your laws. Nature is glad outside, and her merry worms within will ere long topple them down. There is a prairie beyond your laws. Nature is a prairie for outlaws. There are two worlds, the post-office and nature. I know them both. I continually forget mankind and their institutions, as I do a bank.

Well, now this afternoon the snow is lodging on all this ice. Is this the winter gnat I find on the snow, with six legs, a long, narrow, cylindrical body about one sixth of an inch, and the two narrow wings one third longer? Two feelers. Walden not yet frozen.

The red-crowns here still. They appear to frequent one clump of birches a long time, for here the snow beneath is covered with the seeds they have loosened, while elsewhere there are none. They hang by the twigs while they peck the catkins, and others are busy on the snow beneath, picking up what drops. They are continually in motion, with a jingling twitter and occasional mew, and suddenly, when disturbed, go off with a loud jingle like the motion of a whole bag of nuts.

The air is thick and darkened with falling snow, and the woods are being draped with it in white wreaths. This is winter. They are putting on their white great-coats. The woodland road is spotless white.

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The color of the pond depends on the light. It is now dark, in the storm. True to its nature, between earth and air, it is both green and blue. Let clear, serene weather come and illustrate its depth, and it is green; let the air descend on it and toss up its surface in waves, and it is blue like the sky.[1]

Jan. 4. To what I will call Yellow Birch Swamp, E. Hubbard's, in north part of town.

Still ice is left on the trees, but to-day is a windy and blustering day. The quantity of ice on the birches being reduced, they are still more wand- or faery-like. Tall ones, with no limbs for half their height, are gracefully bent over, and are now swaying from side to side in the wind, exactly like waving ostrich-plumes, as delicate as the spray on frosted windows. The color of these ice-clad trees at a distance is not white, but rather slightly grayish or hoary, which the better merges them in the landscape. This is the fourth day of the ice. The landscape is white, not only from the ice on the ground and trees, but from the snow which fell yesterday, though it is not an inch deep. In respect to snow, the winter appears to be just beginning.

I must call that swamp of E. Hubbard's west of the Hunt Pasture, Yellow Birch Swamp. There are more of those trees than anywhere else in town that I know. How pleasing to stand beside a new or rare tree! And few are so handsome as this. Singularly allied to the black birch in its sweet checkerberry scent and its form, and to the canoe birch in its peeling or fringed and

[1] [*Walden*, p. 196; Riv. 276.]

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tasselled bark. The top is brush-like as the black birch; the bark an exquisite fine or delicate gold-color, curled off partly from the trunk, with vertical clear or smooth spaces, as if a plane had been passed up the tree. The sight of these trees affects me more than California gold. I measured one five feet and two inches in circumference at six feet from the ground. We have the silver and the golden birch. This is like a fair, flaxen-haired sister of the dark-complexioned black birch, with golden ringlets. How lustily it takes hold of the swampy soil, and braces itself! And here flows a dark cherry-wood or wine-colored brook over the iron-red sands in the sombre swamp, — swampy wine. In an undress, this tree. Ah, time will come when these will be all gone. Among the primitive trees. What sort of dryads haunt these? Blond nymphs.

Near by, the great pasture oaks with horizontal boughs. At Pratt's, the stupendous, boughy, branching elm, like vast thunderbolts stereotyped upon the sky; heaven-defying, sending back dark vegetable bolts, as if

flowing back in the channel of the lightning. The white oaks have a few leaves about the crown of the trunk in the lowest part of the tree, like a tree within a tree. The tree is thus less racked by the wind and ice.

In the twilight I went through the swamp, and yellow birches sent forth a dull-yellow gleam which each time made my heart beat faster. Occasionally you come to a dead and leaning white birch, beset with large fungi like ears or little shelves, with a rounded edge above.

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I walked with the yellow birch. The prinos is green within. If there were Druids whose temples were the oak groves, my temple is the swamp. Sometimes I was in doubt about a birch whose vest was buttoned smooth and dark, till I came nearer and saw the yellow gleaming through, or where a button was off.

The animals do not use fire; man does. At first there was a pile of cold fat pine roots on the icy rock. A match was rubbed, fire elicited, and now this fire is the most emphatic and significant fact hereabouts. Fire slumbers never far off, and the friction of a match can awaken it.

Jan. 5. To Kibbe Place Swamp.

I see where probably a red squirrel had scratched along over the snow, and in one place a very perfect and delicate print of his feet. His five toes in separate sharp triangles distinctly raying off, or often only four visible. In one

place I find a beaten track from a hole in the *ground* to [a] walnut a rod distant up which they have gone for nuts, which still hang on it. The whole print of the foot, etc., is about an inch and three quarters

long, a part of the leg being impressed. Two of the tracks, when they are running, apparently, the two foremost, are wider apart;

and perhaps with one pair they often make five marks, with the other four. Where there is a deep furrow in a chestnut tree between two swelling muscles, in two instances the squirrels, knowing it to be hollow, have gnawed a hole, enlarging the crack between two

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cheeks, and so made themselves a retreat. In one instance they have commenced to gnaw between the cheeks, though no cavity appears, but I have no doubt the tree is hollow.

A large yellow birch — or black — has the main stem very short and branches very long, nearly from one centre.

There was a fine rosy sky in the west after sunset; and later an amber-colored horizon, in which a single tree-top showed finely.

Jan. 6. Walden apparently *froze over* last night. It is but little more than an inch thick, and two or three square rods by Hubbard's shore are still open. A dark, transparent ice. It would not have frozen entirely over, as it were in one night, or maybe a little more, and yet have been so thin next the shore as well as in the middle, if it had not been so late in the winter, and so ready to freeze. It is a dark, transparent ice, but will not bear me without much cracking. As I walked along the edge, I started out three little pickerel no longer than my finger from *close* to the shore, which went wiggling into deeper water like bloodsuckers or pollywogs. When I lie down on it and examine it closely, I find that the greater part of the bubbles which I had thought were within its own substance are against its under surface, and that they are continually rising up from the bottom, — perfect spheres, apparently, and very beautiful and clear, in which I see my face through this thin ice (perhaps an

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Walden Pond in Winter

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inch and an eighth), from one eightieth of an inch in diameter, or a mere point, up to one eighth of an inch. There are thirty or forty of these, at least, to every square inch. These, probably, when heated by the sun, make it crack and whoop. There are, also, within the substance of the ice, oblong perpendicular bubbles half an inch long, more or less, by about one thirtieth of an inch, and these are commonly widest at the bottom (?), or, oftener, separate minute spherical bubbles of equal or smaller diameter, one directly above another, like a string of beads, perhaps the first stage of the former. But these internal bubbles are not nearly so numerous as those in the water beneath. It may be twenty-four hours since the ice began to form decidedly.

I see, on the sandy bottom a few inches beneath, the white cases of caddis-worms made of the white quartz sand or pebbles. And the bottom is very much creased or furrowed where some creature has travelled about and doubled on its tracks, — perhaps the caddis-worm, for I find one or two of the same in the furrows, though the latter are deep and broad for them to make.[1]

This morning the weeds and twigs and fences were covered with what I may call a leaf frost, the leaves a third of an inch long, shaped somewhat like this, with triangular points, but very thin. Another morning there will be no frost.

I forgot to say yesterday that I picked up four pignuts by the squirrel's hole, from which he had picked

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 382, 383.]

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the meat, having gnawed a hole about half the diameter of the nut in width on each side. After I got home I observed that in each case the holes were on the sides of the nut and not on the edges, and I cut into a couple with my knife in order to see certainly which was the best way to get at the meat. Cutting into the edge, I came upon the thick partition which runs the whole length of the nut, and then came upon the edges of the meats, and finally was obliged to cut away a good part of the nut on both edges before I could extract the meat, because it was held by the *neck* in the middle. But when I cut holes on the sides, not only the partitions I met with were thin and partial, but I struck the meats broadside and extracted them with less trouble. It may be that it is most convenient for the squirrel to hold the nut thus, but I think there is a deeper reason than that. I observe that, out of six whole pignuts which I picked from a tree, three are so cracked transversely to the division of the meat that I can easily pry them open with my knife. They hang on as food for animals.

Jan. 7. To Nawshawtuct.

This is one of those pleasant winter mornings when you find the river firmly frozen in the night, but still the air is serene and the sun feels gratefully warm an hour after sunrise, — though so fair, a healthy whitish vapor fills the lower stratum of the air, concealing the mountains, — the smokes go up from the village, you hear the cocks with immortal vigor, and the children shout on their way to school, and the sound made by the

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railroad men hammering a rail is uncommonly musical. This promises a perfect winter day. In the heavens, except the altitude of the sun, you have, as it were, the conditions of summer. Perfect serenity and clarity and sonorousness in the earth. All nature is but braced by the cold. It gives tension to both body and mind.

Still the snow is strewn with the seeds of the birch, the small winged seeds or samaræ and the larger scales or bracts shaped like a bird in flight, — a hawk or dove. The least touch or jar shakes them off, and it is difficult to bring the female catkins home in your pocket. They cover the snow like coarse bran. On breaking the male catkins, I am surprised to see the yellow anthers so distinct, promising spring. I did not suspect that there was so sure a promise or prophecy of spring. These are frozen in December or earlier, — the anthers of spring, filled with their fertilizing dust.

About ten minutes before 10 A. M., I heard a very loud sound, and felt a violent jar, which made the house rock and the loose articles on my table rattle, which I knew must be either a powder-mill blown up or an earthquake. Not knowing but another and more violent might take place, I immediately ran down-stairs, but I saw from the door a vast expanding column of whitish smoke rising in the west directly over the powder-mills four miles distant. It was unfolding its volumes above, which made it widest there. In three or four minutes it had all risen and spread itself into a lengthening, somewhat copper-colored cloud parallel with the horizon from north to south,

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and about ten minutes after the explosion it passed over my head, being several miles long from north to south and distinctly dark and smoky toward the north, not nearly so high as the few cirrhi in the sky. I jumped into a man's wagon and rode toward the mills. In a few minutes more, I saw behind me, far in the east, a faint salmon-colored cloud carrying the news of the explosion to the sea, and perchance over [the] head of the absent proprietor.

Arrived probably before half past ten. There were perhaps thirty or forty wagons there. The kernel-mill had blown up first, and killed three men who were in it, said to be turning a roller with a chisel. In three seconds after, one of the mixing-houses exploded. The kernel-house was swept away, and fragments, mostly but a foot or two in length, were strewn over the hills and meadows, as if sown, for thirty rods, and the slight snow then on the ground was for the most part melted around. The mixing-house, about ten rods west, was not so completely dispersed, for most of the machinery remained, a total wreck. The press-house, about twelve rods east, had two thirds [of] its boards off, and a mixing-house next westward from that which blew up had lost some boards on the east side. The boards fell out (*i. e.* of those buildings which did not blow up), the air within apparently rushing out to fill up the vacuum occasioned by the explosions, and so, the powder being bared to the fiery particles in the air, another building explodes. The powder on the floor of the bared press-house was six inches deep in some places, and the crowd were thoughtlessly going into it. A few windows

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were broken thirty or forty rods off. Timber six inches square and eighteen feet long was thrown over a hill eighty feet high at least, — a dozen rods; thirty rods was about the limit of fragments. The drying-house, in which was a fire, was perhaps twenty-five rods distant and escaped. Every timber and piece of wood which was blown up was as black as if it had been dyed, except where it had broken on falling; other breakages were completely concealed by the color. I mistook what had been iron hoops in the woods for leather straps. Some of the clothes of the men were in the tops of the trees, where undoubtedly their bodies had been and left them. The bodies were naked and black, some limbs and bowels here and there, and a head at a distance from its trunk. The feet were bare; the hair singed to a crisp. I smelt the powder half a mile before I got there. Put the different buildings thirty rods apart, and then but one will blow up at a time.

Brown thinks my red-headed bird of the winter the lesser redpoll. He has that fall snowbird, he thinks the young of the purple finch. What is my pine knot of the sea? Knot, or ash-colored sandpiper? or phalarope? Brown's pine knot looks too large and clumsy. He shows me the spirit duck of the Indians, of which Peabody says the Indians call it by a word meaning spirit, "because of the wonderful quickness with which it disappears at the twang of a bow."

I perceive (?) the increased length of the day on returning from my afternoon walk. Can it be? The sun sets only about five minutes later, and the day is about ten minutes longer.

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Le Jeune thus describes the trees covered with ice in Canada in the winter of '35 and '36 (he *appears* to be at Quebec): "There was a great wind from the north-east, accompanied by a rain which lasted a very long time, and by a cold great enough to freeze these waters as soon as they touched anything, so that, as this rain fell on the trees from the summit (*cime*) to the foot, there was formed (*il s'y fit*) a crystal of ice, which enchased both trunk (*tige*) and branches, so that for a very long time all our great woods appeared only a forest of crystal; for in truth the ice which clothed them universally everywhere (*partout*) was thicker than a testoon (*épaisse de plus d'un teston*); in a word all the bushes and all that was above the snow was environed on all sides and enchased in (*avec*) ice; the savages have told me that it does not happen often so (*de même*)."

Jan. 8. I see what are probably the anther cells distinctly in the large buds of the poplar, which for a long time have shown their wool one sixth of an inch long. Also similar cells in the alder catkins, but greener and less springlike. The birch ones are the yellowest.

At Walden. — The bubbles which I made under the ice by casting on stones here night before last, or forty-eight hours ago, nearly half a foot in diameter, still remain. The last two days have been very warm, like an Indian summer or very early spring, yet about an inch more of ice has formed, making about two inches in all, and you can see the line of juncture distinctly. The ice is not now transparent, revealing the bottom

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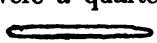
distinctly, and the dark-green color of the water, but whitish or gray, and, though twice as thick, is hardly stronger than before. The air-bubbles within it have greatly expanded in the heat, and run together and lost their regularity. I do not see that they are regularly superimposed, *i. e.* perpendicularly, but they have expanded off and run together at different angles, like silver coins poured from a bag and overlapping each other, and even form thin but wide flakes occasionally. It is too late to study the bottom. The beauty of the ice is gone. With a stone I broke the ice above one of my bubbles and let the air out, and water took its place. I then took out a cake of ice including two old bubbles, each about four inches in diameter, and was surprised to find that they were included between the two ices. I actually took the bubbles out between the ices and turned them bottom-upwards. These bubbles were a quarter of an inch thick and shaped like this:  rounded on the edge. They appeared to be wholly within the new or lower ice, though the under surface of the upper was made rough; and I was surprised to find beneath them, on the under surface of the lower ice, which, like the upper, was, as I have said, about one inch thick, regular circular, saucer-like depressions, in this case five eighths of an inch deep, leaving the lower ice little more than an eighth of an inch thick directly above their middle. Thus: And this thin part of the lower ice was almost perforated by large bubbles almost a quarter of an inch in diameter, which had burst out below. Probably

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there was no ice directly under my largest bubbles. I inferred, therefore, that all those infinite minute bubbles I had seen first on the under side of the ice were now frozen in with it, and that each, in its proportion or degree, like the large ones, had operated like a burning-glass on the ice beneath it to rot it. And probably it is the expanding and shrinking of the air in them, as well as in the water, which cracks the ice and makes the whooping sound.[1] Perhaps those minute bubbles that are seen one above another in the freshest ice have been frozen in like the largest, as they successively rose from the bottom while the ice was freezing. It has been supposed that Walden ice does not keep so well because it has more air in it, there being no outlet or stream to carry it off. There may be something in this. Let me look at the fresh ice of a pond that has a stream; and see if there are fewer bubbles under it. Of course, large bubbles would be very obvious under transparent or black ice.

Jan. 9. 3 P. M. — To Walden and Cliffs.

The telegraph harp again. Always the same unrememberable revelation it is to me. It is something as enduring as the worm that never dies. Before the [*sic*] it was, and will be after. I never hear it without thinking of Greece. How the Greeks *harped* upon the words immortal, ambrosial! They are what it says. It stings my ear with everlasting truth. It allies Concord to Athens, and both to Elysium. It always intoxicates me, makes me sane, reverses my views of things.

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 273, 274; Riv. 383–385.]

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I am pledged to it. I get down the railroad till I hear that which makes all the world a lie. When the zephyr, or west wind, sweeps this wire, I rise to the height of my being. A period — a semicolon, at least — is put to my previous and habitual ways of viewing things. This wire is my redeemer. It always brings a special and a general message to me from the Highest. Day before yesterday I looked at the mangled and blackened bodies of men which had been blown up by powder, and felt that the lives of men were not innocent, and that there was an avenging power in nature. To-day I hear this immortal melody, while the west wind is blowing balmily on my cheek, and methinks a roseate sunset is preparing. Are there not two powers?

Where the brickmakers got their sand I measured the tap-root of a pitch pine, five inches in diameter at the surface, which extended straight downward into pure sand — excepting the usual thickness of soil — nine feet visibly, and undoubtedly three feet further than I could see.

This is the third warm day, the warmest of all. The Andromeda Ponds methinks look redder. I walked through one. The lowest growth is sphagnum, fresh, large, and handsome, some green, some red, into which occasionally I slumped nearly a foot. Some lambkill is mixed with the andromeda. A few islands of gray high blueberry bushes, with round red buds, rise here and there mixed with the panicled andromeda, large cotton-grass, now prostrate, etc. The pitcher-plant leaves are still for the most part green and uninjured here, though full of ice. Many have holes in their sides,

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through which insects appear to have eaten out. However, the external ear or handle is also eaten through, so the agent may have been without.

I see a dogbane sickle-shaped seed-vessel which has not discounted. I open it and let the seeds fly. As I walked the railroad this springlike day, I heard from time to time the sound of stones and earth falling and rolling down the bank in the cuts. The earth is almost entirely bare. We have not yet had snow more than one inch deep!!!

As I climbed the Cliff, I paused in the sun and sat on a dry rock, dreaming. I thought of those summery hours when time is tinged with eternity, — runs into it and becomes of one stuff with it. How much — how, perhaps, all — that is best in our experience in middle life may be resolved into the memory of our youth! I remember how I expanded. If the genius visits me now I am not quite taken off my feet, but I remember how this experience is like, but less than, that I had long since.

Pulling up the johnswort on the face of the Cliff, I am surprised to see the signs of unceasing growth about the roots, — fresh shoots two inches long, white with red leafets, and all the radical part quite green. The leaves of the crowfoot, also, are quite green, and carry me forward to spring. I dig one up with a stick, and, pulling it to pieces, I find deep in the centre of the plant, just beneath the ground, surrounded by all the tender leaves that are to precede it, the blossom-bud, about half as big as the head of a pin, perfectly white.[1] There it patiently sits, or slumbers, how full of

[1] I open one next day, and it is yellow.

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faith, informed of a spring which the world has never seen, the promise and prophecy of it shaped somewhat like some Eastern temples, in which a bud-shaped dome o'ertops the whole. It affected me, this tender dome-like bud, within the bosom of the earth, like a temple upon the earth, resounding with the worship of votaries. Methought I saw the flamens in yellow robes within it. The crowfoot buds — and how many beside! — lie unexpanded just beneath the surface. May I lead my life the following year as innocently as they! May it be as fair and smell as sweet! I anticipate nature. Destined to become a fair yellow flower above the surface to delight the eyes of children and its Maker. It offered to my mind a little temple into which to enter and worship. It will go forth in April, this vestal now cherishing her fire, to be married to the sun. How innocent are Nature's purposes! How unambitious! Her elections are not Presidential. The springing and blossoming of this flower do not depend on the votes of men.

That first day of ice, when my coat and cap were glazed with a thick coat, the fine rain freezing as it fell, was not a cold day. I am pretty sure I have known it rain without freezing when colder. Had the fineness of the rain anything to do with it?

I saw to-day the reflected sunset sky in the river, but the colors in the reflection were different from those in the sky. The sky was dark clouds with coppery or dun-colored under sides. In the water were dun-colored clouds with bluish-green patches or bars.

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Jan. 10. Went a-chestnutting this afternoon to Smith's wood-lot near the Turnpike. Carried four ladies. I raked. We got six and a half quarts,[1] the ground being bare and the leaves not frozen. The fourth remarkably mild day. I found thirty-five chestnuts in a little pile under the end of a stick under the leaves, near — within a foot of — what I should call a gallery of a meadow mouse. These galleries were quite common as I raked. There was no nest nor apparent cavity about this store. Aunt M. found another with sixteen in it. Many chestnuts are still in the burs on the ground. Aunt found a twig which had apparently fallen prematurely, with eight small burs, all within the compass of its five or six inches, and all but one full of nuts. The galleries above named were evidently permanent and not made by one trip.

Jan. 11 and 12. Surveying for John L——.

He says that he saw blackbirds about a week ago. He says that the most snow we have had this winter (it has not been more than one inch deep) has been only a "robin snow," as it is called, *i. e.* a snow which does not drive off the robins. By a bound of his wood-lot in Carlisle, observed a peculiar oak, very smooth and light-colored bark, which his brother, who knows them in Wayland, calls a chestnut oak. I am not quite sure. I did not see a chestnut oak leaf at any rate. *Vide* again. Says they will split like chestnut and are easy to cut. J. says they have both red and white huckleberries near his house. Described an "old

[1] [*Excursions*, p. 197; Riv. 241.]

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fort," about the size and shape of a cellar, which he saw in 1816 perhaps across the river near Heywood's sawmill. This man is continually drinking cider; thinks it corrects some mistake in him; wishes he had a barrel of it in the woods; if he had known he was to be out so long would have brought a jugful; will dun Captain Hutchinson for a drink on his way home. This, or rum, runs in his head, if not in his throat, all the time. Is interested in juniper berries, gooseberries, currants, etc., whether they will make wine; has recipes for this. Eats the juniper berries raw as he walks. Tobacco is another staff of life with him. Thinks, with others, that he has metals on his farm which the divining-rod might find, but is convertible on this point.

Jan. 13. A drifting snow-storm last night and to-day, the first of consequence; and the first sleighing this winter.

Jan. 14. Snows all day.

P. M. — To Walden and Andromeda Ponds.

The place of the sun appears through the storm about three o'clock, a sign that it is near its end, though it still snows as hard as ever. An intenser, whiter light is reflected from the west side of drifts and hills, like another day, in comparison with which the level snow is dark. There is this recognition of fair weather. The west side of abrupt drifts toward the lit clouds reflects quite a glow of light, many shades brighter than the levels. It is a very light snow, lying like down

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or feathery scales. Examined closely, the flakes are beautifully regular six-rayed stars or wheels with a centre disk, perfect geometrical figures in thin scales like this : far more perfect than I can draw. These thin crystals are piled about a foot deep all over the country, but as light as bran. And now the snow has quite ceased, blue sky appears, and the sun goes down in clouds. The surface of fields, as I look toward the western light, appears waved or watered on a large scale, as if different kinds of flakes drifted together, some glistening scales, others darker; or perhaps the same reflected the light differently from different sides of slight drifts or undulations on the surface. Thus beautiful the snow. These starry crystals, descending profusely, have woven a pure garment, as of white watered satin, over all the fields. Snow freshly fallen is one thing, to-morrow it will be another. It is now pure and trackless. Walking three or four miles in the woods, I saw but one track of any kind, that of a rabbit, which was very large and indistinct, necessarily, and scared one partridge from a scrub oak. Most animals — almost all quadrupeds, at least — are now buried deep and still beneath it. Methinks it would not upbear a meadow mouse, but it would sink out of sight in it. There is not a trace of one of these, nor of a muskrat, on the Andromeda Ponds, yet by to-morrow morning there will be countless tracks of all sizes all over the country; which makes me think these creatures, even in the deepest woods and in winter, are far the most active by night. In the midst of the storm I saw the little chestnut or red frontleted bird on the birches. It

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is warm, and the snow-fleas are about. White walls of snow rest on the boughs of trees, in height two or three times their thickness. These white irregular arms give the forest a wintry and picturesque look at a distance. The evergreens, especially the pitch pine, often bear large irregular white burdens, agreeably diversified and loopholed by the interstices of the plumes. But it is only when fresh that this snow on the trees is beautiful. Already, before the storm is over, the surface of the snow in the high woods is full of indentations and hollows where some of this burden has fallen.

I am often reminded that the farmer living far inland has not thought of plows and carts alone. Here, when getting his fuel, he cuts the roots or limbs of some sturdier [tree] with reference to the uses it may serve in the construction of a ship. The farmer not only gets out wood to burn, but ship-timber. It was he who decided the destiny [of] some mighty oak, that it should become the keel of a famous ship. It is he who says, "Ye shall become ships to plow the sea," when he says, "Ye shall become money to me." It is in the woods and in the farmer's yard that the vessel is first put upon the stocks. He burns the hewings in his ample fireplace; he teams the rest to Medford with the same yokes that plow his fields. With bars and chains he clutches and binds to wheels, and with numerous yokes drags it over the hills to the nearest port. He learns as well as the engineer what hills are steep, what ground ascends. By repeated strains and restings on the terraces, he at length surmounts every difficulty.

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Think of the difficulties which the farmer silently overcomes, who conveys the keel or mast of a man-of-war from his woods to the nearest port, which would have defied the skill of a tribe of savages to overcome!

Men's ignorance is made as useful as their knowledge. If one knew more, he would admire less. In the winter how many farmers help build ships where men grow up who never saw the ocean.

I suppose that the meadow mouse can still pick up chestnuts under the snow. The nuts commonly lie as they fell from the bur, two or three together.

The bones of children soon turn to dust again.

Jan. 15. 9 A. M. — To woods.

The starry flakes or crystals, like everything that falls from heaven to earth, have partially melted, coalesced, and lost their regularity and beauty. A good part of the snow has fallen from the trees. See one or two short trails of meadow mice. Apparently they work now under the snow, but when the sun has melted and settled and the cold somewhat consolidated the snow, they come out on the surface? As you walk in the woods you hear the rustling sound of limbs and leaves that are relieved of their burden, and of the falling snow. Young evergreens look like statues partially covered with white veils.

Saw near L——'s, the 12th, a shrike. He told me about seeing Uncle Charles once, come to Barrett's mill with logs, leap over the yoke that drew them and back again. It amused the boys.

True words are those, as Trench says, — transport,

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rapture, ravishment, ecstasy. These are the words I want. This is the effect of music. I am rapt away by it, out of myself. These are truly poetical words. I am inspired, elevated, expanded. I am on the mount.

Mrs. Ripley told me this afternoon that Russell had decided that that green (and sometimes yellow) dust on the under side of stones in walls was a decaying state of *Lepraria chlorina*, a lichen, — the yellow another species of *Lepraria*. Science suggests the value of mutual intelligence. I have long known this dust, but, as I did not know the name of it, *i. e.* what others called [it], and therefore could not conveniently speak of it, it has suggested less to me and I have made less use of it. I now first feel as if I had got hold of it.

In Carlisle and Boxboro they go to church as of old; they are still pagans (*pagani*), or villagers.

Jan. 16. *Sunday.* Cold, with blustering winds drifting the snow. Yesterday the hounds were heard. It was a hunter's day. All tracks were fresh, the snow deep and light. I met Melvin with his bag full.

Trench says that "'rivals,' in the primary sense of the word, are those who dwell on the banks of the same stream" or "on opposite banks," but as he says, in many words, since the use of water-rights is a fruitful source of contention between such neighbors, the word has acquired this secondary sense. My friends are my *rivals* on the Concord, in the primitive sense of the word. There is no strife between us respecting the use of the stream. The Concord offers many privileges, but none to quarrel about. It is a peaceful, not a

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brawling, stream. It has not made *rivals* out of neighbors *that lived on its banks*, but friends. My friends are my *rivals;* we dwell on opposite banks of the stream, but that stream is the Concord, which flows without a ripple or a murmur, without a rapid or a brawl, and offers no petty privileges to quarrel about.[1]

Jan. 20. P. M. — To Walden.

I see where snowbirds in troops have visited each withered chenopodium that rises above the snow in the yard — and some are large and bushlike — for its seeds, their well-filled granary now. There are a few tracks reaching from weed to weed, where some have run, but under the larger plants the snow is entirely trodden and blackened, proving that a large flock has been there and flown.

Ah, our indescribable winter sky, pure and continent and clear, between emerald (?) and amber (?), such as summer never sees! What more beautiful or soothing to the eye than those finely divided or minced clouds, like down or loose-spread cotton-batting, now reaching up from the west above my head! Beneath this a different stratum, all whose ends are curved like spray or wisps, All kinds of figures are drawn on the blue ground with this fibrous white paint.

No sooner has Walden frozen thick enough to bear than the fishermen have got out their reels and minnows, for he who fishes a pond first in the season expects to succeed best.

[1] Bailey, I find, has it: "Rival (*Rivalis* L. q. d. qui juxta eundem rivum pascit)." My friends my rivals are.

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Jan. 21. A fine, still, warm moonlight evening. We have had one or two already. Moon not yet full.

To the woods by the Deep Cut at 9 o'clock.

The blueness of the sky at night — the color it wears by day — is an everlasting surprise to me, suggesting the constant presence and prevalence of light in the firmament, that we see through the veil of night to the constant blue, as by day. The night is not black when the air is clear, but blue still. The great ocean of light and ether is unaffected by our partial night. Night is not universal. At midnight I see into the universal day. Walking at that hour, unless it is cloudy, still the blue sky o'erarches me.

I am somewhat oppressed and saddened by the sameness and apparent poverty of the heavens, — that these irregular and few geometrical figures which the constellations make are no other than those seen by the Chaldean shepherds. The same simplicity and unchangeableness which commonly impresses me by wealth sometimes affects me as barrenness. I pine for a new world in the heavens as well as on the earth, and though it is some consolation to hear of the wilderness of stars and systems invisible to the naked eye, yet the sky does not make that impression of variety and wildness that even the forest does, as it ought. It makes an impression, rather, of simplicity and unchangeableness, as of eternal laws; this being the same constellation which the shepherds saw, and obedient still to the same law. It does not affect me as that unhandselled wilderness which the forest is. I seem to see it pierced with visual rays from a thousand observatories.

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It is more the domain of science than of poetry. But it is the stars as not known to science that I would know, the stars which the lonely traveller knows.

The Chaldean shepherds saw not the same stars which I see, and if I am elevated in the least toward the heavens, I do not accept their classification of them. I am not to be distracted by the names which they have imposed. The sun which I know is not Apollo, nor is the evening star Venus. The heavens should be as new, at least, as the world is new. This classification of the stars is old and musty; it is as if a mildew had taken place in the heavens, as if the stars so closely packed had heated and moulded there. If they appear fixed, it is because that hitherto men have been thus necessitated to see them. I see not merely old but new testaments in the skies. Do not I stand as near the stars as the Chaldean shepherds? The heavens commonly look as dry and meagre as our astronomies are, — mere troops, as the latter are catalogues, of stars. The Milky Way yields no milk.

A few good anecdotes is our science, with a few imposing statements respecting distance and size, and little or nothing about the stars as they concern man; teaching how he may survey a country or sail a ship, and not how he may steer his life. Astrology contained the germ of a higher truth than this. It may happen that the stars are more significant and truly celestial to the teamster than to the astronomer. Nobody sees the stars now. They study astronomy at the district school, and learn that the sun is ninety-five millions [of miles] distant, and the like, — a statement which

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never made any impression on me, because I never walked it, and which I cannot be said to believe. But the sun shines nevertheless. Though observatories are multiplied, the heavens receive very little attention. The naked eye may easily see farther than the armed. It depends on who looks through it. No superior telescope to this has been invented. In those big ones the recoil is equal to the force of the discharge. The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling ranges from earth to heaven, but this the astronomer's does not often do. It does not see far beyond the dome of the observatory.

Compared with the visible phenomena of the heavens, the anecdotes of science affect me as trivial and petty. Man's eye is the true star-finder, the comet-seeker. As I sat looking out the window the other evening just after dark, I saw the lamp of a freight-train, and, near by, just over the train, a bright star, which looked exactly like the former, as if it belonged to a different part of the same train. It was difficult to realize that the one was a feeble oil lamp, the other a world.

As I walk the railroad causeway I am, as the last two months, disturbed by the sound of my steps on the frozen ground. I wish to hear the silence of the night, for the silence is something positive and to be heard. I cannot walk with my ears covered. I must stand still and listen with open ears, far from the noises of the village, that the night may make its impression on me. A fertile and eloquent silence. Sometimes the silence is merely negative, an arid and barren waste in which I shudder, where no ambrosia grows. I must hear the whispering of a myriad voices.

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Silence alone is worthy to be heard. Silence is of various depth and fertility, like soil. Now it is a mere Sahara, where men perish of hunger and thirst, now a fertile bottom, or prairie, of the West. As I leave the village, drawing nearer to the woods, I listen from time to time to hear the hounds of Silence baying the Moon, — to know if they are on the track of any game. If there 's no Diana in the night, what is it worth? I hark the goddess Diana. The silence rings; it is musical and thrills me. A night in which the silence was audible. I hear the unspeakable.

I easily read the moral of my dreams. Yesterday I was influenced with the rottenness of human relations. They appeared full of death and decay, and offended the nostrils. In the night I dreamed of delving amid the graves of the dead, and soiled my fingers with their rank mould. It was *sanitarily*, *morally*, and *physically* true.

If night is the mere negation of day, I hear nothing but my own steps in it. Death is with me, and life far away. If the elements are not human, if the winds do not sing or sigh, as the stars twinkle, my life runs shallow. I measure the depth of my own being. I walk with vast alliances. I am the allied powers, the holy alliance, absorbing the European potentates. I do not get much from the blue sky, these twinkling stars, and bright snow-fields reflecting an almost rosaceous light. But when I enter the woods I am fed by the variety, — the forms of the trees above against the blue, with the stars seen through the pines like the lamps hung on them in an illumination, the somewhat indistinct and misty fineness of the pine-tops, and the

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finely divided spray of the oaks, etc., and the shadows of all these on the snow. The first shadow I came to I thought was a black place where the woodchoppers had had a fire. These myriad shadows checker the white ground and enhance the brightness of the enlightened portions. See the shadows of these young oaks which have lost half their leaves, more beautiful than themselves, like the shadow of a chandelier, and motionless as if they were fallen leaves on the snow,— but shake the tree, and all is in motion.

In this stillness and at this distance, I hear the nine-o'clock bell in Bedford five miles off, which I might never hear in the village, but here its music surmounts the village din and has something very sweet and noble and inspiring in it, associated, in fact, with the hooting of owls.

Returning, I thought I heard the creaking of a wagon just starting from Hubbard's door, and rarely musical it sounded. It was the telegraph harp. It began to sound but at one spot only. It is very fitful, and only sounds when it is in the mood. You may go by twenty times, both when the wind is high and when it is low and let it blow which way it will, and yet hear no strain from it, but another time, at a particular spot, you may hear a strain rising and swelling on the string, which may at last ripen to something glorious. The wire will perhaps labor long with it before it attains to melody.

Even the creaking of a wagon in a frosty night has music in it which allies it to the highest and purest strain of the muse.

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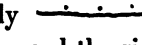
I think it was January 20th that I saw that which I think an otter track [1] in path under the Cliffs, — a deep trail in the snow, six or seven inches wide and two or three deep in the middle, as if a log had been drawn along, similar to a muskrat's only much larger, and the legs evidently short and the steps short, sinking three or four inches deeper still, as if it had waddled along. It finally  turned into my old tracks and went toward the river and Fair Haven Pond. One was killed there last spring. Minott says his mother told him she had seen a deer come down the hill behind her house, where I. Moore's now is, and cross the road and the meadow in front; thinks it may have been eighty years ago. Otter are very rare here now. I have not heard of any killed hereabouts for twenty or thirty years till, within two years, two or three of them. In Sudbury and at Fair Haven Pond.

Jan. 23. *Sunday.* Rain, carrying off the snow and making slosh of the lower half of it. It is perhaps the wettest walking we ever have.

Jan. 25. P. M. — To Flint's Pond, down railroad.

There is something springlike in this afternoon. In winter, after middle, we are interested in what is springlike. The earth and sun appear to have approached some degrees. The banks seem to lie in the embrace

[1] No doubt it was. Israel Rice tells of one shot within the year in a ditch near White Pond; probably the same. He says I saw an otter track.

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of the sun. The ground is partly bare. The cress is fresh and green at the bottoms of the brooks. What is that long-leaved green plant in the brook in Hosmer's meadow on the Turnpike? The buttercup leaves appear everywhere when the ground is bare. There are temporary ponds in the fields made by the rain and melted snow, which hardly have time [to] freeze, they soak up so fast. As I go up Bare Hill, there being only snow enough there to whiten the ground, the last year's stems of the blueberry (*vacillans*) give a pink tinge to the hillside, reminding me of red snow, though they do not semble it. I am surprised to see Flint's Pond a quarter part open, — the middle. Walden, which froze much later, is nowhere open. But Flint's feels the wind and is shallow.

I noticed on a small pitch pine, in the axils close to the main stem, little spherical bunches of buds, an inch and more in diameter, with short, apparently abortive leaves from some. The leaves were nearly all single, as in the plants of one or two years' growth, and were finely serrate or toothed, pectinate (?). On the lot I surveyed for Weston I found the chestnut oak (though the teeth are sharper than E.'s plate), a handsome leaf, still on the young trees. I had taken it for a chestnut before. It is hard to distinguish them by the trunk alone. I found some barberry sprouts where the bushes had been cut down not long since, and they were covered with small withered leaves beset with stiff prickles on their edges, and you could see the thorns, as it were gradually passing into leaves, being, as one stage, the nerves of the leaf alone, —

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starlike and branched thorns, gradually, as you descended the stem, getting some pulp between them. I suppose it was owing to the shortening them in. I still pick chestnuts. Some larger ones proved to contain double meats, divided, as it were arbitrarily, as with a knife, each part having the common division without the brown skin transverse to this.

The pickerel of Walden! when I see them lying on the ice, or in the well which the fisherman cuts in the ice, I am always surprised by their rare beauty, as if they were a fabulous fish, they are so foreign to the streets, or even the woods; handsome as flowers and gems, golden and emerald, — a transcendent and dazzling beauty which separates [them] by a wide interval from the cadaverous cod and haddock, at least a day old, which we see. They are as foreign as Arabia to our Concord life, as if the two ends of the earth had come together. These are not green like the pines, or gray like the stones, or blue like the sky; but they have, if possible, to my eye, yet rarer colors, like precious stones. It is surprising that these fishes are caught here. They are something tropical. That in this deep and capacious spring, far beneath the rattling teams and chaises and tinkling sleighs that travel the Walden road, this great gold and emerald fish swims! They are true topazes, inasmuch as you can only conjecture what place they came from. The pearls of Walden, some animalized Walden water. I never chanced to see this kind of fish in any market. With

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a few convulsive quirks they give up their diluted ghosts.[1]

I have noticed that leaves are green and violets bloom later where a bank has been burnt over in the fall, as if the fire warmed it. I saw to-day, where a creeping juniper had been burnt, radical leaves of johnswort, thistle, clover, dandelion, etc., as well as sorrel and veronica.

Young white oaks retain their leaves, and large ones on their lower parts.

Swamp white oak (?)
Very young rock chestnut oaks
The little chinquapin (?)
The bear oak
The scarlet oak (?)
The red
The black (?), young trees
The witch-hazel, more or less
Carpinus Americana
Ostrya Virginica, somewhat
Sweet-fern, more or less
Andromeda
Andromeda, panicled (?)
Kalmia latifolia
Kalmia angustifolia
Cranberry

The above are such as I think of which wear their leaves conspicuously now.

Jan. 26. Up river on ice 9 A. M., above Pantry.

A sharp, cutting air. This is a pretty good winter

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 314, 315; Riv. 439, 440.]

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morning, however. Not one of the rarer. There are from time to time mornings, both in summer and winter, when especially the world seems to begin anew, beyond which memory need not go, for not behind them is yesterday and our past life; when, as in the morning of a hoar frost, there are visible the effects of a certain creative energy, the world has visibly been recreated in the night. Mornings of creation, I call them. In the midst of these marks of a creative energy recently active, while the sun is rising with more than usual splendor, I look back,— I look back for the era of this creation, not into the night, but to a dawn for which no man ever rose early enough. A morning which carries us back beyond the Mosaic creation, where crystallizations are fresh and unmelted. It is the poet's hour. Mornings when men are new-born, men who have the seeds of life in them. It should be a part of my religion to [be] abroad then. This is not one of those mornings, but a clear, cold, airy winter day.

It is surprising how much room there is in nature,— if a man will follow his proper path. In these broad fields, in these extensive woods, on this stretching river, I never meet a walker. Passing behind the farmhouses, I see no man out. Perhaps I do not meet so many men as I should have met three centuries ago, when the Indian hunter roamed these woods. I enjoy the retirement and solitude of an early settler. Men have cleared some of the earth, which no doubt is an advantage to the walker. I see a man sometimes chopping in the woods, or planting or hoeing in a field, at a distance; and yet there may be a lyceum in the evening, and there

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is a book-shop and library in the village, and five times a day I can be whirled to Boston within an hour.

There is a little thin ice on the meadows. I see the bubbles underneath, looking like coin. A slight, fine snow has fallen in the night and drifted before the wind. I observe that it is so distributed over the ice as [to] show equal spaces of bare ice and of snow at pretty regular distances. I have seen the same phenomenon on the surface of snow in fields, as if the surface of the snow disposed itself according to the same law that makes waves of water. There is now a fine steam-like snow blowing over the ice, which continually lodges here and there, and forthwith a little drift accumulates. But why does it lodge at such regular intervals? I see this fine drifting snow in the air ten or twelve feet high at a distance. Perhaps it may have to do with the manner in, or the angle at, which the wind strikes the earth.

Made a roaring fire on the edge of the meadow at Ware (?) Hill in Sudbury. A piece of paper, birch bark, and dry leaves started it, and then we depended on the dead maple twigs and limbs to kindle the large dead wood. Green wood will burn better than the damp and rotten wood that lies on the ground. We chose a place which afforded a prospect, but it turned out that we looked only at the fire. It made all places indifferent. The color of the coals, in a glowing heap or seen through the white ashes on the brands, like rubies. The shadows, coming and going, of the flame passing over the white ashes of the brands. I burnt off my eyelashes when the fire suddenly blazed up with the wind, without knowing that I had come very near it. Though

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our fuel was dead and rotten wood found in the snow, it made very little smoke, which may have been owing to the state of the atmosphere, clear and cold. The sound of the air or steam escaping from a brand, its sighing or dying shriek, fine and sharp as a cambric needle, is the music we hear. One half the pleasure is in making the fire. But then we should have something to cook by it. Collecting fresh fuel from time to time is very pleasant. The smoke ever and anon compelled us to move round to the opposite side. The sap which flowed from some maple boughs which I cut froze in large drops at the end. How came sap there now?

It is remarkable that many men will go with eagerness to Walden Pond in the winter to fish for pickerel and yet not seem to care for the landscape. Of course it cannot be *merely* for the pickerel they may catch; there is some adventure in it; but any love of nature which they may feel is certainly very slight and indefinite. They call it going a-fishing, and so indeed it is, though, perchance, their natures know better. Now I go a-fishing and a-hunting every day, but omit the fish and the game, which are the least important part. I have learned to do without them. They were indispensable only as long as I was a boy. I am encouraged when I see a dozen villagers drawn to Walden Pond to spend a day in fishing through the ice, and suspect that I have more fellows than I knew, but I am disappointed and surprised to find that they lay all the stress on the fish which they catch or fail to catch, and on nothing else, as if there were nothing else to be caught.

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When we got off at some distance from our fire, returning, we saw a light bluish smoke rising as high as the woods above it, though we had not perceived it before, and thought that no one could have detected us.

At the fall on Clematis Brook the forms of the ice were admirable. The coarse spray had frozen as it fell on the rocks, and formed shell-like crusts over them, with irregular but beautifully clear and sparkling surfaces like egg-shaped diamonds, each being the top of a club-shaped and branched fungus icicle. This spray had improved the least core — as the dead and slender rushes drooping over the water — and formed larger icicles about them, shaped exactly like horns, with the skulls often attached, or roots of horns. On similar slight limbs there were built out from the shore and rocks all sorts of fantastic forms, with broader and flatter bases, from which hung stalactites of ice; and on logs in the water were perfect ice fungi of all sizes, under which the water gurgled, flat underneath and hemispherical. A form like this would project over the water: six inches deep by four or five in width and a foot long, held by the rocks, but with a slight weed for core. You could take off the incrustations on the rocks, turn them up, and they were perfect shells.

Looking down on it

These are the horns: a foot or two high. In the rock incrustations there were upright club-shaped icicles, as I have said, packed close together, three or four inches long, thus: and so on, right and left, with a homogeneous or undivided base. They appeared like crystallizations, as quartz crystals with rounded instead of flattened summits, built from below and, as they grew, widening or thickening to fill the space.

The only birds I have seen to-day were some jays, — one whistled clearly, — some of my mewing red frontlets, and some familiar chickadees. They are inquisitive, and fly along after the traveller to inspect him.

In civilized nations there are those answering to the rain-makers and sorcerers of savages. Also this office is universal among savage tribes. Bitter, cutting, cold northwest wind on causeway, stiffening the face, freezing the ears.

Jan. 27. Trench says a wild man is a *willed* man. Well, then, a man of will who does what he wills or wishes, a man of hope and of the future tense, for not only the obstinate is willed, but far more the constant and persevering. The obstinate man, properly speaking, is one who will not. The perseverance of the saints is positive willedness, not a mere passive willingness. The fates are wild, for they *will;* and the Almighty is wild above all, as fate is.

What are our fields but *felds* or *felled* woods. They

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bear a more recent name than the woods, suggesting that previously the earth was covered with woods. Always in the new country a field is a clearing.

Jan. 28. Saw three ducks sailing in the river behind Prichard's this afternoon, black with white on wings, though these two or three have been the coldest days of the winter, and the river is generally closed. Observed a new wall, of stones recently dug out of the earth, all yellow and easily detected at a distance, not yet gray with lichens. Though somewhat cool, it has been remarkably pleasant to-day, and the sun-sparkles where the river is open are very cheerful to behold.

As I approached Bateman's Pond, the ice looked blue. Is it indeed blue like Walden ice?

I saw an improvement, I suppose by William Brown, on the shore of the pond this afternoon, which really is something to tell of. The exploits of the farmer are not often reported even in the agricultural paper, nor are they handed down by tradition from father to son, praiseworthy and memorable as so many of them are; though if he ran away from hard work once in his youth and enlisted, and chanced to be present at one short battle, he will even in his old age love to dwell on this, "shoulder his crutch and *show how fields are won*," with cruel satire, as if he had not far better shown this with his axe and spade and plow. Here was an extensive swamp, level of course as a floor, which first had been cut, then ditched broadly, then burnt over; then the surface paved off, stumps and all, in great slices; then these piled up every six feet, three

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or four feet high, like countless larger muskrat-cabins, to dry; then fire put to them; and so the soil was tamed. We witnessed the different stages in different parts of the swamp.

You can walk in the woods in no direction but you hear the sound of the axe.

I tasted some black shrivelled pyrus berries in a spruce swamp; rather sweet.

Jan. 29. To Walden.

Melvin calls the ducks which I saw yesterday sheldrakes; being small, then wood sheldrakes.[1] He never shot any at this season. Saw a woodcock last month; never before. Killed a goshawk (which was eating a rabbit) and a cat owl lately. Says I hear the cat owl. Has got only three or four minks this year. Never saw an otter track.

I saw a little grayish mouse frozen into Walden, three or four rods from the shore, its tail sticking out a hole. It had apparently run into this hole when full of water, as if on land, and been drowned and frozen. Headed downward, it was. The ice is eight inches thick. It is full of short, faint, flake-like perpendicular cleavages, an inch or two broad, or varying somewhat from the perpendicular. Melvin thinks that the "thundering" of the pond scares the pickerel.

Pickerel of at least three different forms and colors were lying on the ice of Walden this afternoon: first, a long and shallow kind most like those caught in the

[1] I judge from the plate they were velvet ducks, or white-winged coots.

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river, steel-colored with greenish or brownish lines, darker on the back and white beneath; second, a bright-golden fish with greenish reflections, remarkably deep, with a shorter head; both of these are mottled on the sides with an irregular network of dark-brown lines, often extending over the back, the meshes three fourths of an inch long, more or less, producing longitudinal stripes more or less distinct and continuous, very pure white beneath; third, shaped like the last, but peppered on the sides with small dark-brown or black spots, intermixed with a few faint blood-red ones, very much like a trout. The specific name of *reticulatus* would not describe this. These are all very firm fish, and weigh more than their size promises.

The perch also, and indeed all the fishes which inhabit this pond, are as much handsomer than ordinary, as the water is purer than that of other ponds. Probably many ichthyologists would make new varieties, at least, of most of them.[1]

Jan. 30. The most common and conspicuous green leaf on the ground when the snow is off at this season, as at present, is that of the buttercup. Sorrel is also very common, and johnswort, and the purplish gnaphaliums. There is also the early crowfoot in some places, strawberry, mullein, and thistle leaves, and hawkweeds, etc., etc.

On Cliffs.

The westering sun is yet high above the horizon, but, concealed by clouds, shoots down to earth on every side

[1] [*Walden*, pp. 204, 205; Riv. 288, 289.]

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vast misty rays like the frame of a tent, to which clouds perchance are the canvas, under which a whole country rests. The northern and southern rays appear very much slanted and long; those between us and the west, steeper and shorter.

What I have called the Shrub Oak Plain contains comparatively few shrub oaks, — rather, young red and white and, it may be, some scarlet (?). The shrub oak leaf is the firmest and best preserved. The white oak is the most sere and curled and brittle, frequently with discolored, mould-like spots.

Jan. 31. Found an Indian adze in the bridle-road at the brook just beyond Daniel Clark, Jr.'s house.

A man is wise with the wisdom of his time only, and ignorant with its ignorance. Observe how the greatest minds yield in some degree to the superstitions of their age.

De Quincey (whose pains to prove that [it] was not Christ's mission to teach men science, though he, *of course* (!), knew it all, suggested the above) says: —

"This downward direction of the eyes, however, must have been worse in former ages; because, else, it never *could* have happened that, until Queen Anne's days, nobody ever hinted in a book that there *was* such a thing, or *could* be such a thing, as the Aurora Borealis; and in fact, Halley had the credit of discovering it."

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X

FEBRUARY, 1853

(ÆT. 35)

Feb. 1. Surveying the Hunt farm.

Saw a duck in the river; different kind from the last. Dr. Bartlett tells me that it was Adam Winthrop, a *grandson* of the *Governor*, who sold this farm to Hunt in 1701. I saw the old window, some eighteen inches square, of diamond squares, four or five inches across, set in lead, on the back side [of] the house.

Feb. 2. The *Stellaria media* is full of frost-bitten blossoms, containing stamens, etc., still and half-grown buds. Apparently it never rests.

Feb. 3. Saw three ducks in the river. They resort to those parts necessarily which are open, which are near the houses. I always see them in the fall as long as the river and ponds are open, and, that being the case all this winter (almost), they have not all gone further south. The shallow and curving part of the river behind Cheney's being open all this winter, they are confined for the most part to this, in this neighborhood.

The thickest ice I have seen this winter is full nine inches.

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Feb. 5. To Walden, P. M.

A thick fog. The trees and woods look well through it. You are inclined to walk in the woods for objects. They are draped with mist, and you hear the sound of it dripping from them. It is a lichen day. Not a bit of rotten wood lies on the dead leaves, but it is covered with fresh, green cup lichens, etc., etc. All the world seems a great lichen and to grow like one to-day, — a sudden humid growth. I remember now that the mist was much thicker over the pond than elsewhere. I could not distinguish a man there more than ten rods off, and the woods, seen dimly across a bay, were mistaken for the opposite side of the pond. I could almost fancy a bay of an acre in extent the whole pond. Elsewhere, methinks, I could see twice as far. I felt the greater coolness of the air over the pond, which it was, I suppose, that condensed the vapor more there.

Somebody has been fishing in a rude way and left some of their lines, apparently by mistake. They have laid branches of alders over the holes, and, after tying their lines to a stick two feet long to prevent their being pulled through, have passed the slack line over a twig of the alder a foot or more above the ice and tied a dry oak leaf to it, which, being pulled down, will show when they have a bite. These sprigs or boughs are arranged all around the pond.[1]

At the eastern shore I see at last how those ridges or ramparts are formed along the edges of ponds. The sand has been recently cast up there, six or eight inches high, by a foot or two in width, just on the edge of the

[1] [*Walden*, p. 314; Riv. 439.]

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ice, in the form of waves just breaking on the shore, as if the ice had crowded against the shore and forced it up, or it had been washed down by the rain and lodged against the edge of the ice. On a close examination, I found that apparently the ice had not moved, but rather had melted a foot or two, and left bare ground, the water having subsided since it froze, and its edge was exceedingly thin and rotten. The sand was forced or puffed up in the form of a pent roof for a long distance, and under this roof there was no frost in the ground, though all the shore above was still frozen, and even below, if the ice happened to be very thin and there was no water between it and the sand. Apparently the water of the pond, warmed by the rain which had run into it, especially next the shore, penetrating under the frozen shore, produced this expansion and puffing up of the shore there. Sometimes the ice itself, lying on the shore, was raised. The stones as big as one's fist, which for the most part compose the shore, were heaved up into a less conspicuous ridge, all loose, beneath which also there was no frost; also the dead wood, chips, twigs, and other rubbish. Within a limited space, just on the edge of the ice, was the phenomenon so common in the spring, of the frost coming out of the ground. No matter how large the rocks superimposed, or what the depth of sand that had accumulated, it was heaved up, so that the pitch pines by my shore were literally tipped or pried over by a force applied beneath, and many may now be seen slanted at an angle of forty-five degrees. Taking up some masses of this shore heaved up, which were still frozen,

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I found that, as in stones a vein of a different kind often passes through and through them, so the frozen sand alternated with sparkling veins of clear ice. Where the water had stood over the sand and frozen, and then fresh sand been worked into it, these veins of ice surrounded by sand were black. The ice of Sam Barrett's pond has a greenish tinge. The bottom of the ice on the edge of the pond next the sand had a singularly reticulated appearance, like tripe or the coats of the stomach, and I thought I detected the effects of countless air-bubbles of all sizes which had melted it there.

The frost is out of the ground in many places. A *Stellaria media* in blossom in the garden, and were of course last month.

Feb. 6. Observed some buds on a young apple tree, partially unfolded at the extremity and apparently swollen. Probably blossom-buds.

Feb. 8. The warm rains have melted off the surface snow or white ice on Walden, down to the dark ice, the color of the water, only three or four inches thick; but I observe that still, for a rod or more in width around the shores, the ice is white as snow and apparently thicker, probably owing to the reflection from the bottom from the first filling it with air-bubbles.[1]

Feb. 9. At Cambridge to-day.

Dr. Harris thinks the Indians had no real hemp but

[1] [*Walden*, p. 332; Riv. 463, 464.]

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their apocynum, and, he thinks, a kind of nettle, and an asclepias, etc. He doubts if the dog was indigenous among them. Finds nothing to convince him in the history of New England.[1] Thinks that the potato which is said to have been carried from Virginia by Raleigh was the ground-nut (which is described, I perceived, in Debry (Heriot?) among the fruits of Virginia), the potato not being indigenous in North America, and the ground-nut having been called wild potato in New England, the north part of Virginia, and not being found in England. Yet he allows that Raleigh cultivated the potato in Ireland.

Saw the grizzly bear near the Haymarket to-day, said (?) to weigh nineteen hundred, — apparently too much. He looked four feet and a few inches in height, by as much in length, not including his great head, and his tail, which was invisible. He looked gentle, and continually sucked his claws and cleaned between them with his tongue. Small eyes and funny little ears; perfectly bearish, with a strong wild-beast scent; fed on Indian meal and water. Hind paws a foot long. Lying down, with his feet up against the bars; often sitting up in the corner on his hind quarters.

Two sables also, that would not be waked up by day, with their faces in each other's fur. An American chinchilla, and a silver lioness said to be from California.

Feb. 11. *Friday.* While surveying for J. Moore today, saw a large wood tortoise stirring in the Mill

[1] Agassiz asked him what authority there was for it.

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Brook, and several bodies of frogs [1] without their hind legs. But Sunday it snowed about a foot deep, — our second, only, important snow this winter, — and now the brook is not only frozen over, but almost completely concealed under drifts, and that reminiscence or prophecy of spring is also buried up.

While surveying on the Hunt farm the other day, behind Simon Brown's house I heard a remarkable echo. In the course of surveying, being obliged to call aloud to my assistant from every side and almost every part of a farm in succession, and at various hours of a day, I am pretty sure to discover an echo if any exists, and the other day it was encouraging and soothing to hear it. After so many days of comparatively insignificant drudgery with stupid companions, this leisure, this sportiveness, this generosity in nature, sympathizing with the better part of me; somebody I could talk with, — one degree, at least, better than talking with one's self. Ah! Simon Brown's premises harbor a hired man and a hired maid he wots not of. Some voice of somebody I pined to hear, with whom I could form a community. I did wish, rather, to linger there and call all day to the air and hear my words repeated, but a vulgar necessity dragged me along round the bounds of the farm, to hear only the stale answers of my chain-man shouted back to me.

I am surprised that we make no more ado about echoes. They are almost the only kindred voices that I hear. I wonder that the traveller does not oftener remark upon a remarkable echo, — he who observes

[1] *Rana palustris.* Channing saw some entire.

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so many things. There needs some actual doubleness like this in nature, for if the voices which we commonly hear were all that we ever heard, what then? Has it to do with the season of the year? I have since heard an echo on Moore's farm.

It was the memorable event of the day, that echo I heard, not anything my companions said, or the travellers whom I met, or my thoughts, for they were all mere repetitions or echoes in the worst sense of what I had heard and thought before many times; but this echo was accompanied with novelty, and by its repetition of my voice it did more than double that. It was a profounder Socratic method of suggesting thoughts unutterable to me the speaker. There was one I heartily loved to talk with. Under such favorable auspices I could converse with myself, could reflect; the hour, the atmosphere, and the conformation of the ground permitted it.

Feb. 13. In the midst of the snow-storm on Sunday (to-day), I was called to window to see a dense flock of snowbirds on and under the pigweed in the garden.[1] It was so in the other storm. It is to be remarked that I have not observed them in the garden at any other time this winter. They come with the storm, the falling and driving snow. I *suspect* they were my chestnut-fronted ones.[2]

Feb. 23. *Wednesday.* Melvin tells me that he saw shiners while fishing in Walden yesterday. The ice-

[1] Probably tree sparrows. [2] Not linarias.

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men worked till midnight night before last at Loring's Pond, to improve the short cold.

I think myself in a wilder country, and a little nearer to primitive times, when I read in old books which spell the word savages with an *l* (salvages), like John Smith's "General Historie of Virginia, etc.," reminding me of the derivation of the word from *sylva*. There is some of the wild wood and its bristling branches still left in their language. The savages they described are really *salvages*, men of the *woods*.

Feb. 27. Frank Brown has killed, within a day or two, a tree sparrow (*Emberiza Canadensis*, Canada bunting, or tree sparrow, of Audubon's Synopsis). I think this must be my bright-chestnut-fronted bird of the winter,[1] though Peabody says it is distinguished by the spot on the breast, which reminds me of the larger, finch-like bird.

A week or two ago I brought home a handsome pitch pine cone which had freshly fallen and was closed perfectly tight. It was put into a table drawer. To-day I am agreeably surprised to find that it has there dried and opened with perfect regularity, filling the drawer, and from a solid, narrow, and sharp cone, has become a broad, rounded, open one, — has, in fact, expanded with the regularity of a flower's petals into a conical flower of rigid scales, and has shed a remarkable quantity of delicate-winged seeds. Each scale, which is very elaborately and perfectly constructed, is armed with a short spine, pointing downward, as if to protect

[1] A mistake. *Vide* [*Journal*, vol. v, p. 3].

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its seed from squirrels and birds. That hard closed cone, which defied all violent attempts to open it, and could only be cut open with [*sic*], has thus yielded to the gentle persuasion of warmth and dryness. The expanding [of] the pine cones, that, too, is a season.

Mr. Herbert is strenuous that I say "ruffed grouse" for "partridge" and "hare" for "rabbit." He says of the snipe, "I am myself satisfied that the sound is produced by the fact that the bird, by some muscular action or other, turns the quill-feathers edgewise, as he drops plumb through the air; and that while in this position, during his accelerated descent, the vibration of the feathers and the passage of the air between them gives utterance to this wild humming sound."

END OF VOLUME IV

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